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## Anthony Burgess

DAVID ROBINSON  
*Chaplin: The Mirror of Opinion*  
Hogarth, Secker and Warburg, £9.95  
(paperback, £6.50).  
043620538

Some of us have of late been undergoing a phase of disenchantment with Chaplin's films - not the early Keystone brevities so much as the more ambitious feature movies which began with *The Kid* (1921; 5.300 feet). There are perhaps two reasons for this, and both have something to do with amateurish crudity. One is the camerawork, lighting and editing; the other is Chaplin's own music, which, though dubbed in late, has now to be accepted as part of the cinematic totality. Chaplin was a musician in the manner of the traditional British stage comedian: he could handle some musical instruments - chiefly keyboard and strings - because the music-hall was what it said it was. He was no more a professional musician than was, say, William Shakespeare, who doubtless could pluck a few chords from a lute when prescribing what tunes he needed for his lyrics and probably, unlike Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, could discourse a little on the recorder. The trouble with Chaplin was that he grew pretentious and was rich and famous enough to impose mediocre scores on his productions. 'You can't tell Charlie anything', sighed Aldous Huxley when a number of Californian intellectuals tried to dissuade him from making *Monsieur Verdoux*. It was hard to tell him anything about such cinematic values as were represented by sophisticated cameras and editing techniques. His own virtuosity was enough, so he believed, to undoubtedly was enough in the days of the one-reeler. We watch the full-length films with a mixture of enchantment and despair. The comic turns are superb; the handling of the story is disastrous. Chaplin tried to fuse Karmoesque mime with Victorian sentimentalism. These were two genres that could never blend, but they were the only genres he knew.

Brief flickering displays of clowning genius accompanied by a pit piano playing anything but an anonymous - that was the real Charlie. Other film comedians - Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd, Stan Laurel - were more solidly children of cinema and effected a comparatively painless transition from silence to sound. In the late 1920s the breath of Chaplin lovers (which meant everybody) was bated while the first

Chaplin sound film was in slow preparation. *City Lights* and *Modern Times* showed his skill in evading the problems of sound: a city councillor makes a speech which is translated into saxophone gurglings (not well done: Chaplin should have left it to somebody else); Charlie loses the words of his song and has to improvise nonsense; finally, triumphantly, in *The Great Dictator*, he gives a Hitlerian speech whose German phonemes are so exact that even to the Germans it sounds like German. But sound is mostly mocked. No underdog dialect could ever fit the tramp figure: when Chaplin finally speaks, it is in a home-made patrician English which works for Verdoux, Hynkel and the king in New York but would not have done for the hero of *Shoulder Arms* or *The Pilgrim*. The tramp has to remain soundless; the problem of Charlie Chaplin was never solved.

Naturally, in the early days of the talking film, admirers of Chaplin took the impossibility of wiring him for sound as undeniable evidence that talk would never work on the screen. Film was, almost by definition, Charlie Chaplin, and if he could not talk neither could, remaining true to its nature, the medium he glorified. But it was enough, in 1929, to listen to the distorted moans of *The Broadway Melody* and *The Doctor's Secret* to be convinced that cinema was an expansive medium. Colour in *Gold Diggers of Broadway* was crude, but one knew that it would get better. As soon as film began to talk, the whole of the future, including *A Space Odyssey* and *E.T.*, was potentially in existence, and Charlie belonged to the period of the soldier's song:

Oh the moon shines bright on Charlie Chaplin  
His shoes are crackin'  
For want of blackin'  
And his little baggy trousers they'll want mendin'  
Before they send him  
To the Dardanelles.

(Those baggy trousers were not little: they had belonged to Roscoe Arbuckle.)

David Robinson's book is concerned with what people have written about Chaplin from the Fred Karno days to the disastrous *A Countess from Hong Kong*. Chaplin, when writing his autobiography, remembered word for word a review in the *London Times* of *Jim: A Romance of Cockayne*, which ended: 'But there is one redeeming feature, the part of Sammy, a newspaper boy, a smart London street arab, much responsible for the comic part. Although hackneyed and old-fashioned, Sammy was made vastly amusing by Master Charles Chaplin, a bright and vigorous child actor. I have never heard of the boy before, but

I hope to hear great things of him in the near future.' His brother Sydney bought a dozen copies of the paper. Who remembers Sydney now? His films have disappeared, leaving only an after-image of one of the most beguiling white-toothed smiles of the cinematic 1920s. It is important to remember, however, that Charlie's gift was nurtured in a theatrical family. Mr Robinson reproduces the cover of a song ('Ehl Boys!'), by John P. Harrington and Geo Le Brunn) 'sung by Charles Chaplin', father not son, the more famous features clear in the manically grinning portrait. 'He died at only 37 in 1901, bequeathing to young Charlie a lifelong horror of intemperance.' Young Charlie's mother, Hannah, was a saubrette who ended in an asylum. Loyal after his fashion, Charlie called one of his sons Sydney and the heroine of *The Great Dictator* Hannah. The name suggests, because of that film, that there was Jewish blood on the mother's side, but the racial mixture of the Chaplins seems to have been Spanish, gypsy, Irish and Huguenot French. Caricatured as a Jew in *Der Stürmer*, Chaplin was happy enough to accept the impeachment. As John McCabe put it, 'Charlie Chaplin is virtually part Jewish almost most of the time'.

How much did he owe to Fred Karno? A great deal, thought Stan Laurel, in many ways a nicer character than Chaplin, of whom he was a coeval in the *Casey's Court* days. 'Keep it wistful, gentlemen', Karno would cry, 'That's hard to do but we want sympathy with the laughter.' Both Laurel and Chaplin profited from the injunction, but Chaplin was, says McCabe, 'born wistful'. The comic instinct was to the family, but Karno gave Charlie's a direction and insisted on the importance of timing. Chaplin became a multimillionaire while still a young man, but when Karno died in 1941 at seventy-five, he left a little over forty pounds. Still, the conscript army of the Second World War took over the Karno myth from the troops of the previous one. 'It's a proper Karno's' was almost the first thing I heard when I joined up in 1940, and 'we are Fred Karno's army' was still sung on the march. Some things are better than money.

The last great star whom Chaplin the producer-director employed was Marlon Brando. There was a certain irony in the choice of an Actor's Studio trainee by a great professional who had never held with the relentless meditation on character and motivation. The figure of the tramp was not created from the inside; he was improvised out of old clothes that happened to be lying around and was, from first to

last, a bag of eccentric skills and mannerisms. Once created, he had to be explained, and Chaplin, *post factum* or *achum*, saw clearly enough what he was about - a figure of disorientation with nothing proletarian in him (the stick, pathetic relic of bourgeois respectability, saw to that) who, often without intention, put down the more harmless representatives of wealth and authority. But he still needed a larger critical intelligence than his own to place his casual creation in the serious field of art.

As early as 1914, Minnie Madden Fiske published an article called 'The Art of Charles Chaplin' in *Horner's Weekly*, comparing him to Anstophanes, Plautus, Shakespeare, Rabelais and Fielding. His early critics, almost without exception, took him seriously. The public's response to the Chaplin phenomenon was to turn him into an immediate myth, which not merely critics but sociologists had to explain. There were Chaplin songs, figurines, comic books, toys. In 1915 he became a comic strip character on the front page of the *Funny Wonder*, and was still there in the 1930s - restored to an English low-life setting with sausages and mash, masked burglars with bags marked SWAG, casually making cigarette smoke come out of his right ear. No Anglo-Saxon critic-philosopher could adequately deal with him: inevitably, it was a Frenchman who pioneered the in-depth intellectual study. When Chaplin became Charlot, the world began to understand him better, though a certain cineastic glumness took the fun out of him.

Louis Delluc established in 1917 a magazine called *Filmi*, to which Colette, Coteau, Aragon and Apollinaire contributed. He may be called the first genuine film critic, forcing a daily film column on *Paris Midi*, eventually becoming highly philosophical with the periodical ominously titled *Cinéa*. In 1921 came the first book on Chaplin - *Charlot* - which Delluc persuaded a reluctant Bodley Head to publish in England the following year. British filmgoers, who saw in Chaplin merely a fine comic in a known tradition, did not quite know what to make of Delluc's talk of Velázquez, Dürer, Jean de Paris and Clouet. Knowledge about the Karmoesque Chaplin had received, Delluc nevertheless cannot resist bringing in the Attic tradition, alluding to Agamemnon and Elektra. In *Shoulder Arms* he sees bitterness, even tragedy - 'an hour of lashes, one after the other. . . . When dogs are writhed they bay at the moon. That war film of Chaplin bays most terribly at the moon.' That war film of Chaplin, which the troops of Fred Karno's army blessed while they laughed,

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paradox manifest in a letter of Lawrence where he analyses the dynamic of Forster's writing: all his "thinking and his passion for humanity amounts to no more than trying to soothe with poetry a man raging with pain which can be cured" – though his suggestion of how Forster might cure it is comically wide of the mark: "Why can't he take a woman and fight clear to his own basic, primal being?"

Was Forster "raging with pain" or was he happy in his half-unconscious, half-elected celibacy? In the letters the strongest personal feeling is reserved for Syed Ross Masood, a large, handsome and flamboyant figure whom Forster coached in 1906 and fell in love with. Masood encouraged Forster in a quite new language of friendship; it was a procedure – like the physical warmth of Latin male friendships in *Where Angels Fear to Tread* – which moved and in a sense deceived Forster, for while Masood was never sexually interested in him he none the less spoke and wrote to him in terms far more passionate than any other of his correspondents. Forster was obliged, and thrilled, to reciprocate, but again it is clear that a deployment of rhetoric conceals the uneasy reality: for Masood the endeavours are a convention, for Forster they are a nervous and exhilarating expression of the truth, and given greater authenticity by their foreignness. The natural decline of a friendship that has to be maintained across years and continents is seen, in Forster's letters, as the withering of an unrequited love-affair, full of reproach and instantaneous forgiveness. There are brave jokes, which create at the same time as they

explode a fantasy: "It's an awful pity when people who love each other and might live together don't. I'm coming to live with you in our old age, but till then you must make some other arrangement." There are hurt shortenings of terms of address: reproach for inattention – Masood now only writes formal letters five lines long – is followed by spilling forth of sentimental memories of a visit they made together to Tesserete, and a moment of uncertainty – "I expect the above will be rather queer to you". There is the unavoidable recognition of their distancing and Forster's plea "Try not to forget me." When it comes to his relations with Mohammed el Adl there is none of this moribund reliance on the word, no writing at all.

The only cry of pain is associated with his initiation into sex, and the convulsions of self-assessment it brings about. "Yesterday, for the first time in my life, I parted with respectability", he writes to Florence Barger. It had been a random encounter with a soldier on the beach at Alexandria, ironically the scene of an earlier homoerotic rhapsody on naked Arab bathers written for G. L. Dickinson's enlightenment. The new incident has a typically ominous inevitability: "I have felt the step would be taken for many months", and provokes an unhappy self-justification after its unsatisfactory conclusion: "I am tethered to the life of the spirit". *Maurice* is characteristically invoked: "It's us if (in the novel) Alice Scudder" had been ordered to come and then dismissed at once." And then, through the euphemisms, he articulates movingly his personal crisis:

The life of hopes fears fancies ideals memories – all the unsubstantial fry of the spirit – I am weary of feeding on it, even if, as seems likely, I am too old to change to other food. It's not good enough because it isn't all. Perhaps – but I'm not hopeful – it may be better for the next generation, even for the men and women in it who are like me. My life has not been unhappy, but it has been too damp, too dark, too wordy and physically too lonely.

It is an emphatic endorsement of Lawrence's diagnosis.

It is also highly revealing that he extrapolates from his experience at once a further form of prophecy: "it may be better for the next generation". For the reader of *The Longest Journey* and *Howards End*, not to mention *Maurice*, the conviction that the suffering of the (literally) lip-sided) Rickie, of Helen Schlegel, Leonard Bast, Maurice Hall, is a sacrifice made to secure a new order is strengthened by Forster's looking ahead in his letters. The visionary ends of these novels, which against all the odds insist on the possibility of new happiness, a new integration, almost a new sex, are surely a covert assertion of Forster's homosexuality, its needs and the needs of all his kind. Out of loneliness Forster wrings a consolation for the lonely. The unpublished *Maurice* itself was to become a strange token to a future generation, shown to the selected few, like Isherwood, who had inherited the world that in *Maurice* could only be a fantasy. Like Housman and with total accuracy Forster looks to an unborn continuity of homosexuality. "Apart from the joy of all this", he writes to Florence Barger later of

Mohammed el Adl, "I feel, more deeply, a solemnity and think of what you once said, the possibilities of human intercourse are beginning." With an unconscious pun, he writes to Siegfried Sassoon of *Maurice*: "It's done as well as I can do it, and I know nobody else who has done it, though possibly the right thing, shaming our clumsy efforts, has been in a hundred drawers."

But if *Maurice* sought, and predicted, a community, and a whole community of *Maurice* its liberating effect on Forster was only marginal. His euphemism for homosexuality in the letter – "You will have guessed the sort of thing it was the Maurice sort" – is disturbingly the traumatic declaration of Maurice to his family doctor that he is "an unspeakable of the Oscar Wilde sort". Such feelings identify themselves only by furtive reference to other things, and the Forster who returns to England in *Maurice* does not find a country alerted or sympathetic, but a land and drawingroom as he was when he left, the "unbroken front of dress shirts and golf". It is with a sense that *Maurice* makes nothing happen, and with marked frustration, illness and depression that Forster goes to get to work in England. It is a shame that Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank give us some of Forster's letters to the press at this time: authoritative, sarcastic, impassioned, they would form a telling counterpart to the private correspondence and constitute another prophecy: of Forster's impending move into the status of creative artist to that of historian, critic and commentator.

Guardian to the poetry of Dafydd Iwan. Perhaps not. At one stage he was busy searching a full-scale book on the Welsh poet but he soon abandoned the project because "Celtic literature, like any other, produces no royalties". But there has been any kind of living in Celtic literature. Rhys would probably be entirely forgotten except by the Welsh Arts Council. But Welsh loss was the public's gain.

His first literary job was as editor of the Camelot Classics, a shilling series published at the modest rate of fifteen volumes a year. Through his editorship he met most of the young and needy writers of London, often employing them as volume editors. In 1891 with Yeats and T. W. Rolleston he founded the Rhymers' Club, whose members met regularly at the Cheshire Cheese to drink and read each other's wistful little poems. In no time at all Rhys had acquired a reputation as a man who could have written famously delicate poetry had he not had to earn his living as a publisher's drudge. Pound, though, in those mutters is poor, thought that Rhys had sacrificed a talent for spinning "Welsh gold" to "much editing and hack work".

In the middle of all this hack work Rhys continued to find odd moments in which to pursue his "Celtic and medieval studies". Perhaps his "Welsh Literary Notes" succeeded in introducing the readers of the *Manchester*

As editor of Everyman's Library from 1906 to 1940 Rhys was responsible for the selection of 967 titles, at that time the largest library of pocket books in the history of publishing. Among the 130 titles he edited himself were works by Pope, Tennyson, Wordsworth, Hawthorne, Melville, Emerson, Dumas, Hugo, Trollope and Carroll. In spite of the large output of critical essays Rhys does not discuss Rhys's influence as a popular critic. He is for millions of readers in the first half of the century Ernest Rhys was the provider and interpreter of world literature and a benign influence on the literary curriculum as well as on a large hook culture. Everyman did his job well, at least because he was, as Edward Thomas remarked, "an absolutely devoted lover of a gentle and fine things".

Water, relating it to his recoil from Nordic modernism, and to his ideal of a personal cultural self-sufficiency. Amusingly illustrated by the writer, these letters are from one whose avowed ideal was "refusing to compete". Powys's letters to G. R. Wilson Knight are understandably very different. They cover a period of twenty-five years. Their editor, R. L. Blackmore, observed that Powys's letters from Wales constitute the second part of his autobiography, the first part being covered by the unimpeachable, masterly book of that name. But this particular book is also part of Powys's letter to the Nobel committee in 1959, recommending him for the Prize. That gesture was characteristic. Professor Knight is still Powys's foremost and most eloquent champion.

Initially Powys was on his guard ("Professor" being a sinister word in his vocabulary), writing with what for him is relative formality. But a meeting between the two men in April 1949 broke down his reserve, and the subsequent letters are buoyant, spontaneous,

intellectually stimulating, and frank. They are, indeed, extremely frank: the discussion of the sublimating function of masturbation (longer developed by Knight in *Nightmare Powers*) is here set forth in terms that are neither of fact and not embarrassing. Equally direct are the literary comments. Powys's reaction to his fellow writers was essentially one of dislike of competition may have remained personal contacts. But to Knight he does write freely, and admirers of both writers will be interested in Powys's detailed comments on these letters are indeed among the most rewarding of those written during Powys's last years, and show that his childlike pose, his period was in part a deliberate pose. He was a critical and intellectual faculties for himself, but is sometimes thought, and these letters suggest that a re-appraisal of the writings of Powys, so-called "dogma" may be overdue. "When else, both these collections reveal the honesty and goodness of someone who was as true as a great man as he was a writer."

## Purgatorial flame

Pat Raine

ALICE THOMAS ELLIS  
The Other Side of the Fire  
166pp. Duckworth. £7.95.  
071561809 t

In Alice Thomas Ellis's last novel, *The 27th Kingdom*, the dance of death was a central motif; now, death is joined in another calamitous dance by his tipsy half-sister, love – "it was always called Romance". So much was the original character in the early part of *The Other Side of the Fire*. It is Sylvie, herself cured of the traumatic declaration of Maurice to his family doctor that he is "an unspeakable of the Oscar Wilde sort". Such feelings identify themselves only by furtive reference to other things, and the Forster who returns to England in *Maurice* does not find a country alerted or sympathetic, but a land and drawingroom as he was when he left, the "unbroken front of dress shirts and golf". It is with a sense that *Maurice* makes nothing happen, and with marked frustration, illness and depression that Forster goes to get to work in England. It is a shame that Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank give us some of Forster's letters to the press at this time: authoritative, sarcastic, impassioned, they would form a telling counterpart to the private correspondence and constitute another prophecy: of Forster's impending move into the status of creative artist to that of historian, critic and commentator.

Quod, Sylvie's friend, is the heroine stricken with an unappeasable passion. It comes upon her suddenly, like a nervous rash. Her previous contentment dissolves around her, leaving her disconsolate. It becomes necessary for her, against her nature, to exercise cunning and engage in subterfuge. Her infatuated condition cannot be concealed, but no one must guess the cause of it, least of all the loved one himself – her stepson Philip, whose grace and beauty have bewitched her. The reader understands the significance of these unmasculine qualities long before Claudia does: women, however desirable and obtainable, are never really a serious temptation for Philip.

Romance in fiction comes in many forms, some of them a good deal more disreputable than others. This exceptionally felicitous novel contains a sardonic measure for its own preoccupation with the theme of love: some splendid passages from a low-brow love story are merrily inserted into its elegant narrative. Sylvie's clever daughter Evvie, an Oxford undergraduate who discovers in herself a talent for trash, is the author of this work, which concerns some temperate incidents on a wind-blown isle. We see her in the act of composing it: "Safe at last in the haven of Fergus's absolutely ghastly sitting room... No, ... in the haven of Fergus's manly arms, Clara felt her heart swell with happiness. There was something wrong. Something missing. Oh help, Clara had forgotten the baby..."

Evvie is greatly excited, at the beginning of the novel, to discover in the locality a group of characters who approximate quite closely to those she is in the course of inventing: chief among them is a Scotch vet. "The Scotch vet," said Evvie, "... a pillar of women's fiction." As in Marcel Schwob's last novel, *Loitering with Intent*, the fortuitous correspondences between art and life, God's gifts to the novelist, add the weird sense of omniscience which sometimes overlies the author of fiction, or rather a comic showing. The vet in Evvie's honk

is called Fergus, and his life is complicated by the doings of his scapegrace brother Mungo; these names quickly get distorted to Fungus and Mungo. There is also, both in the rubbishy novel and out of it, a cow called Violet (once playfully printed as "Violent"). One of Alice Thomas Ellis's usual ingredients is an incorrigible animal; the main one here, however, is the dog Gloria, whose attitude to humans is in anely aggressive.

The real-life vet serves Claudia as a smokescreen to obscure her inappropriate affection for Philip; the novel, though, is not a comedy of cross-purposes, and no entertaining contretemps results from this stratagem. The title phrase, in one of its senses, alludes to the flames of purgatory: the thought is Sylvie's, and Sylvie, like an earlier Ellis heroine, though with less cause, is more than half in love with death. (Elliott's "refining fire / Where you must move in measure, like a dancer" also finds an echo in Ellis's eschatological image.) The author, as ever, imposes on these elemental concerns a decorative and idiosyncratic outline; her way of treating passions is effectively unimpassioned. Like Horace, though, who supplies an epigraph for the novel (as well as being the subject of Evvie's serious work), she displays "an endless interest in people's antics" – and she has devised, to accommodate it, a uniquely enchanting and exhilarating style.

## Keeping it in the family

Lindsay Duguid

GILLIAN TINDALL  
Looking Forward  
368pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £8.95.  
0340 34506 3

*Looking Forward* is a long, loosely constructed novel, chronicling the individual histories of several heroines; both the parallel lives of contemporaries and the family likenesses of successive generations. Part-anga, part-remembrance, Gillian Tindall's book also offers a chunk of social history and some ominous universal themes – the feminist predicament and the meaning of life are two of them.

Joanna and her insensitive husband Tom, sorting through the belongings of Mary Deavers, realize how little they know about the past: "Then all those First World War letters can't be his family." What letters? "You know. In the bureau drawer. You saw them too." Their young daughter Kate flops down on a sofa with a novel by Joanna's mother Dodie Devnors: "Arc you enjoying that?" "Not much. It's pissy." Joanna sees, as so many come to see in the pages ahead, that "death is not an event but a permanent situation".

## Small Boys Watch An Aeroplane Drop Leaflets

an incident from 1948

Where does it come from, this blown paper littering the city squares, these feathers left by birds on grass, those clouds drifting unawares and breaking softly against glass?

Appearing suddenly, the aeroplane rocks the bay. All those waves. She sets trees shaking and boats bobbing, narrowly shaves the hill, avoiding its throat,

but not its children, playing at war, who do not bear the oracle but see the falling of white leaves as something of a miracle – the liberation of hooded cherubs.

GEORGE SZIRTES

## Gills to girls

John Melmoth

DAVID G. SMITH  
The Music Stops and the Waltz Continues  
217pp. Chatto and Windus. £7.95  
(paperback, £3.95).  
07011 2721X

For all David G. Smith's insistence that he has written a love story, *The Music Stops and the Waltz Continues* is a manic tangle of sentimental education and frenetic road novel. Its protean hero – "Davide", "wee Davie", "David" – leaves the cheerful brutality, untrained libidinousness and downright squalor of an unnamed Scottish village where pleasures and pains are reckoned "in quarts and gills, punches and stitches" and goes in search of metropolitan sophistication. His journey from country to city takes him beyond London to Paris (experienced through a haze of *vin ordinaire*), Bologna (where the girls and the meals are equally *al dente*) and the backstreets of Amsterdam (where everyone is mad, bad and dangerous to know and where he is briefly recruited by the whimsical Bureau for the Investigation of Future Possibilities).

His gregariousness, seen as a symptom of profound alienation, brings him into more or less significant touch with soft-pom starlets, muddled Vegans, self-destructive novelists,

alternative medics, demented mystics and a countess masquerading as a roofing contractor – all of them irritatingly self-congratulatory about their own wackiness. Nor is David indifferent to his own image: casting himself variously as a hitch-hiking man of constant sorrow ("I touch the pulse of melancholy") and as a blithe erotomaniac, "merry and bright", as dapperly priapic as the youthful Henry Miller. Retrospectively, he is ready to attribute a heuristic importance to this hotch-potch of random connections. He has learned that knowledge ("like fucking") brings only ephemeral satisfaction, that the consequence of sustained whoredom is boredom and that love is a "poisson soluble".

He is willing to concede that he holds a range of indefensible political opinions, is unwilling to join the Labour Party and contemptuous of "politicized myopes". His professed sympathy with the life-style politics of "the revolutionaries of life" is little more than a by-product of his dedicated exploration of sexual possibilities, from adolescent experimentation, through the mechanical promiscuity of the "Ouspensky-Buggery" brigade, to lyrical monogamy. The details of these sundry couplings are not without interest but the attempt to base a sexual mythopoeia on them goes somewhat awry. David's claim to be humping history is scarcely credible.

Blurb-writers appear not to cotton on to the disservice that their professional overstatement does the debutant novelist. That David Smith writes with "the energy of Kerouac, the lyricism of Laurie Lee and the ruthless wit of Martin Amis" is neither true nor self-evidently desirable. No excess of puff can make of Smith's book more than an interesting and idiosyncratic first effort, but it can obscure the significance of a restricted success: *The Music Stops and the Waltz Continues* has nostalgia value. It recalls a time in the 1960s when Zen and the Yaqui way of knowledge did not seem transparently absurd, when it was possible to argue that Krishnamurti, Dostoevsky and R. D. Laing were saying the same important thing, when flamboyant schizophrenia was *de rigueur*, when acoustic guitars, jumble-sale frocks and marijuana constituted a semiotics of rejection. The irrepressible blurbist's contention that "anyone under forty" will read this book with a sense of shared experience is insufficiently precise: it fails to indicate how much over thirty one must be to pick up the references.

## Poe-session

JULIAN SYMONS  
The Name of Annabel Lee  
191pp. Macmillan. £6.95.  
0333 35171 1

Dudley Potter, staid, somewhat prudish, is a thirty-four-year-old Englishman lecturing in English literature at a minor Ivy League college in upstate New York. At an appalling total theatre experience he meets the attractive and mysterious Annabel Lee, who moves in with him. The name is not a coincidence; her sister is called Lenore; their mother was obsessed by the work of Edgar Allan Poe. When Annabel Lee abruptly abandons him, Dudley follows her trail to London, to a very odd cottage on the Yorkshire coast (decorated strictly in accordance with Poe's aesthetic pronouncements), and then to New York, where the mystery is solved.

After three stories of Victorian crime Julian Symonds has returned to the present, and finds it rather disgusting. A brilliant but jaundiced eye is cast over provincial American academia, hardheaded Yorkshire businessmen, and – especially – contemporary London. In a series of vignettes whose subjects range from skinheads to the swinging life of a rich solicitor-cum-publisher.

As a tale of mystery *The Name of Annabel Lee* perhaps isn't altogether satisfactory. Coincidence is rife; the solution not unguessable, while the sudden changes of mood and scene dislocate – obviously with intention – the narrative. When viewed as a tale of imagination, however, apparent defects turn into positive qualities: from this angle the book works supremely well.

T. J. Binyon

## The Everyman man

Nigel Cross

exquisitely produced series "The Writers of Wales". Unfortunately, as J. Kimberley Roberts makes quite clear, Rhys's verse and prose are not the Welsh "Celtic" slender

07083 08465

Ernest Rhys had a vision: he looked forward to the day when the "great public" would have "world literature within its grasp". Fortunately, his vision was shared by the publisher J. M. Dent and in 1905 the two of them founded Everyman's Library with Rhys as editor. Within five years 500 titles had been published at a shilling each, and within twenty years twenty million copies had been sold. Reviewing Rhys's memoirs, *Everyman Remembers* (1931), Edgell Rickword wrote "I do not know that anyone can even approximately compute the accumulated debt that the reading classes owe to the organiser of Everyman's Library."

But Rhys was also a leading figure in the Celtic Twilight movement of the 1890s; a second-rate poet whose best verse his friend Ezra Pound thought "damn good". It is this side of his literary work that has led to his inclusion in the Welsh Arts Council's

Welsh School of a solo comment on the state of Anglo-Welsh literature at the turn of the century.

As this is the first separate study of Rhys both as a 'bookman' and a Welsh writer it is a great pity that a mere sixth of its sixty-six pages of text (based, it seems, entirely on secondary sources) considers his editorial achievements, while the rest is devoted to his biography, poems, translations and status in Anglo-Welsh literature. If Roberts had delved deeper into Rhys's career as a bookman his slim study would have been quite long enough – especially as Rhys wrote three volumes of autobiography. As it is, he tacitly admits the absurdity of his Welsh emphasis: "however minor his poetry or ambivalent his Welsh attitudes there can be no doubt of the importance of Ernest Rhys as an editor".

Born in Llangifonilly in 1859 of an English mother, Rhys spent only six years in Wales before his father, a wine-merchant, moved the family to Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Rhys's sense

seventy-nine gathered in these two collections show little overlapping. The first, *The Letters of Ernest Rhys to G. R. Wilson Knight*, covers the years 1937-1956. Their recipient has done much towards furthering Powys's literary reputation in Sweden, himself translating three of the novels. The correspondence began with a fan letter to which Powys responded graciously. This was customary with him; but he seems to have taken a rather particular liking to this admirer, bestowing on him the nickname Erik the Red, a sure sign of approval. The letters are genial and relaxed, not to say fatherly: clearly Powys was fascinated by the adventurousness and individuality of his young friend (Knight was twenty-two when the letters commenced) and enjoyed making contact with a cultural tradition to which he was not usually responsive (he claims that Strindberg was the only Scandinavian writer he did not find dull). The letters reveal his abiding interest in language, an interest examined in *Celtic Elements*, a valuable introduction, which also discusses Powys's love for

Wales, relating it to his recoil from Nordic modernism, and to his ideal of a personal cultural self-sufficiency. Amusingly illustrated by the writer, these letters are from one whose avowed ideal was "refusing to compete". Powys's letters to G. R. Wilson Knight are understandably very different. They cover a period of twenty-five years. Their editor, R. L. Blackmore, observed that Powys's letters from Wales constitute the second part of his autobiography, the first part being covered by the unimpeachable, masterly book of that name. But this particular book is also part of Powys's letter to the Nobel committee in 1959, recommending him for the Prize. That gesture was characteristic. Professor Knight is still Powys's foremost and most eloquent champion.

Initially Powys was on his guard ("Protes-



# Manufactured mythologies

Hugh Seton-Watson

ERIC HOBBSBAWM and TERENCE RANGER  
(Editors)  
The Invention of Tradition  
320pp. Cambridge University Press. £17.50.  
0 521 24645 9

The subject of this interesting collection of essays is the modern phenomenon of "traditions" artificially created by governments, or non-governing élites, with the aim of linking their régimes or their authority with the distant past of their community, and of strengthening the legitimacy of their rule or leadership. Recent, and less recent, history is full of such phenomena. Five have been selected by the contributors to this volume. Hugh Trevor-Roper has chosen the mythology of the Scottish Highlander, and Prys Morgan the revival of Welsh language and nationality. Next comes a fascinating account by David Cannadine of the elevation, by ritual, ceremony and publicity, of the British Monarchy from a very low ebb in the early nineteenth century to its present status as one of the few flourishing industries in a languishing economy. Bernard Cohn's essay on British India concentrates on the Imperial assemblage of 1877 in the Vice-Royalty of Lord Lytton. Terence Ranger examines the founding efforts of British administrators to discover, elaborate and manipulate equivalents in Africa (his main examples being Tanganyika, Uganda and Rhodesia) of European monarchies and feudal hierarchies.

All this makes enthralling reading but raises several questions. How far have the contributors pin-pointed a specific phenomenon, confined to a recent period of history, how far indeed have they stuck to the rather precise definition stated by Eric Hobsbawm in his introduction: "the conscious or unconscious invention of a tradition"?

Some grew very slowly, and their initiators are not known to us, if indeed there were any: the Hellenic legends of the gods, or the system of Roman law. In other cases the careers of founders of religions, and the efforts of their disciples to formulate the main body of doctrine, were compressed within a century or less: this can be said of Jesus, Muhammad and Buddha. Secular rulers who deliberately created institutions and habits of obeisance, which were developed by their successors, abound in the historical records. Do modern inventors of traditions radically diverge from this rather long-established pattern?

The contents of this book might have been described by such ugly, morally neutral, phrases of thoroughly modern jargon as "laying the foundations of legitimacy", "creating a sense of collective identity", or simply "the technique of mass mobilization". But "invention of tradition" is hardly, like them, "value-free". Tradition is almost by definition reprehensible, something to be mocked and deplored, and invention implies a sinister, not a progressive, type of manipulation. In some of these contributions one senses an underlying, painfully restrained, disapproval: it comes to the surface in the chapter by Professor Ranger, where the qualified noun "invented tradition" and the adjective "neo-traditional" are hand-

merged home again and again as the author from his intellectual Olympus looks down on the ridiculous objects of his contemptuous pity.

Yet essentially the five cases discussed fall into two main groups of phenomena, inevitably produced by certain social and political conditions. One is the necessity for a new conqueror of an old empire to strengthen his legitimacy by establishing a hierarchy of élites and sub-élites both willing to support it and interested in its maintenance. The second is the need for aspiring élites among subject populations to create and strengthen among their peoples a belief in their common identity. This has sometimes been achieved in the past through the creation by prophetic figures of new religions, or more often of new sects within a prevalent religion. In modern times the unifying factor has more often been a secular national consciousness propagated, revived or even created by small élites who have developed a dialect into a literary language, popularized folklore and oral poetry, and combined research with fantasy to produce a national historical mythology. Similar trends can be seen among populations which can be called "peripheral" but hardly "subject", such as the Scots and the Welsh.

Both types of activity have usually involved distortions of reality that are comic or odious or both, but mockery or condemnation of these features do not greatly promote understanding of processes which historical situations have made inevitable.

The British Raj in India was the successor to a long line of despotisms, many of which were of extra-peninsular origin. The British rulers largely misunderstood the social structure, land tenure systems and political hierarchies of preceding régimes, and the efforts of Lytton and Curzon to have their absurd aspects. But did the founders of earlier régimes always have better understanding, and were the British cul-

lprators, or Macedonian from Persian, or Moguls from Hindus, or Mongols or Manchus from Han Chinese? Western historians of conquered lands have no doubt brought to their works the intellectual limitations of their own cultures, but also a scientific approach to historical study which was not conspicuously prevalent among the intelligentsias of those lands before the British conquered them, or even among the authors of the classical chronicles of the distant Arabic and Chinese past.

The inapplicability of Western structures and institutions was of course even more striking in Africa, where tribal and cultural units were more numerous and smaller, and history much more obscure. However, African nationalists have shown themselves eager disciples of their former Western masters in the invention of traditions, as the mythologies of Ghana and Mali, to take only two examples, clearly show.

The creation of national historical mythologies has been a major enterprise in large parts of Europe not just in recent times but for centuries past, and has been practised in the periphery of the British Isles. Its idiocies are well known, but its merits forgotten, especially by the English, who practised it in the Middle Ages but have not needed it since then. The biological descent of the English from the

jan's legions is a nonsense, but the historical research of Iuriga was impressive, even if he was a poor Prime Minister, a chauvinist nrtor and not much of a prose stylist. Sometimes myth-makers have resorted to forgery: here, as Trevor-Roper points out, Scots and Czechs share a melancholy eminence. Trevor-Roper's talents are lavishly deployed on the grotesque stories of "Ossian" MacPherson and the brothers Subieski-Stewart. But his eloquence carries him too far. To conclude that, because Irish Gaelic occupied Argyll in the fifth century, and the Gaelic branch of Celtic pushed out the British, as well as the still unidentified Pictish language, therefore all literature in Scottish Gaelic remained for the next 1,200 years (300 of these under Norwegian rule) a mere "crude echo of Irish literature" is, to put it mildly, a non sequitur. If Trevor-Roper has read, in the original texts, any significant works in Scottish and Irish Gaelic, and formed an opinion on that basis, then this reviewer, who is not linguistically equipped to do likewise, will respect his judgment, but still not accept it, because others who are well qualified take another view. As for Trevor-Roper's clear implication that bagpipe music was of no significance before the late eighteenth century, it simply does not accord with the facts. It is a pity that this eminent historian did not confine himself to MacPherson and the tartan industry, on which he appears to know his stuff.

Forgery of historical documents to legitimate historical mythologies has fallen into disuse, being no longer suited to modern conditions. The benevolent methods of George III and Mettemich have been replaced by streamlined dictatorships which can impose straightforward falsification of history by purging textbooks. Thus, Muslim epics in Soviet Central Asia and Transcaucasia are shorn of passages regarded in Moscow as tainted by "bourgeois nationalism", and the post-war additions of Romania's chief poet, Eminescu, do not count as one well-known - and certainly national-

istic - poem which speaks of the Romanian as extending "from the Danube to the Tiber", thus including lands of Hungarian speech as well as the whole of Bessarabia, regarded in Moscow, despite its Romanian population, as an inviolably Russian ever since the Tsar and the Sultan partitioned Moldavia in 1812. Czech Poles and Tatars too have had their history falsified by Moscow's edit.

The contributions by Eric Hobsbawm stand out for their quality, surpassing the other essays. The analysis in his introduction of categories and sub-categories of tradition and of invention is an effective exercise in clarification of terms; and in his concluding essay he has interesting things to say, taking examples from different countries, on such matters as the proliferation of public statues and national anthems, the celebration of revolutions and the manufacture of rituals in sport; as well as on the association of different practices with different classes. Too many and too wide-ranging thoughts emerge from reading Hobsbawm to be discussed here. Two minor phenomena may be mentioned which can be partly assumed under the head of Invented Tradition and one would like to read Hobsbawm on them. One is the naming of streets after political dates (as in Paris and Rome) or after Ministers (a galaxy of these, for example, in side-streets west of Wimbledon Broadway) or campaigns (a profusion of such from the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878 to side streets in Berlin - why?) Another is the construction of public buildings of pompous magnificence imitating the magnificence of earlier ages, perceptibly modifying them by newly added classical classes (St Pancras station, the Stadhaus Düsseldorf, Moscow State University).

The *Invention of Tradition* arouses in me admiration, annoyance, disagreement and delight, which testifies to its sustained interest and stimulus. It should contribute to debate and reflection among historians.

## Business connections

C. S. L. Davies

MURIEL ST CLARE BYRNE (Editor)  
The Lisle Letters: An Abridgement  
Selected and arranged by Bridget Boland  
436pp. Secker and Warburg. £12.50.  
0 436 07905 4

Just over two years ago the six volumes of the Lisle Letters appeared, to a barrage of critical acclaim (they were reviewed in the TLS on October 9, 1981). Printing some 1,590 letters (themselves only some two-thirds of the original archive) and providing an engagingly idiosyncratic discursive commentary, Muriel St Clare Byrne recreated a Tudor family saga with an enormous cast; the elderly Lord Lisle, bastard son of Edward IV, governor, a somewhat ineffective one (though Miss Byrne would dispute that), of Calais for his nephew Henry VIII; his shrewd, determined middle-aged wife Honor; their respective children and stepchildren by previous marriages; a further host of relatives, creditors, servants, and assorted hangers-on; cynical career-clerks and bot-gospellers; the whole galaxy of the court, from the King and Thomas Cromwell downwards, seen through necessarily realistic calculating eyes. In a class by himself is John Hussey, the Lisle's factotum in London, sharing with Lady Lisle the steering of the whole enterprise, reporting who is in and who is out, who should be conciliated (and for how much), whom to be on one's guard against, above all, hanging interminably about the court to catch the right person in the right mood to help forward some piece of vital business; a grant of manorial land, for instance, which had been stuck in the trammels of bureaucracy, or even worse, delayed by the machinations of a grasping enemy.

The political drama is compelling enough as Lisle navigates (or, rather, gets pointed by Honor and Hussey) through the shoals of official religious policy, only to be overwhelmed at last in the storm raised by Cromwell in his frenzied attempt to save himself in 1540. Lisle's

the execution of his dissembling essay, which he dropped dead from "so great a pressure of joy" on receipt of a belated pardon. But the letters are a prime source for a mass of details of relations of husband and wife, parents and children, tutors and pupils, masters and servants, debtors and creditors; on habits of dress (Lisle's ease), on fashion, on favours, on the elaborate etiquette of the exchange of gifts which played a crucial part in the political game (food, drink and assorted gifts to the King himself; on tricks of speech and the decided rhythm of speech (reproduced, in a largely declined letters); on the free use of the idiom in aristocratic correspondence (Lady Lisle in no way behindhand).

Bridget Boland has skilfully selected some 340 letters and kept just enough of the Lisle's commentary to explain them; but the political story emerges more clearly in the slimmer version than in the original. The *bonnes bouches* are there; the King's leading interrogation ("What? So soon? So soon?") Lord Edmund Howard's excusing himself from an invitation because Lady Lisle's mediation has "made me such a pinner that I dare not go abroad"; Hussey's problems with the day go abroad; the high standard of the original production is retained; good looking, handsome, type-face and endpapers, a selection of facsimiles, useful maps and appendices. And the abridgement is produced in a style which would not be outrageous for a mill academic paperback. May the publishers be amply rewarded for their thoughtful readership.

Volume One of *The Southwold Diary of Maggs* edited by Alan Partridge. Suffolk: Boydell Press. £12.00 85115 185. The diary, 1818 to 1848. Meticulous about financial matters, Maggs rarely permits his personal opinion; and his record is of the 1802 Dec 27th The Ship "Frederick" (1802 Dec 27th The Ship "Frederick")

1271 TLS November 18 1983

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*THE DOWNFALL OF CAPITALISM AND COMMUNISM:*



# Making mock

Norman McCaig

ROBERT GARIOCH  
Complete Poetical Works  
Edited by Robin Fulton  
327pp. Edinburgh: MacDonald. £12.95.  
0904265 935

I suppose I must recognize that Robert Garioch, whose work is so well known and well loved north of the border, is little more than a name to almost all poetry readers south of it, simply because he wrote almost entirely in Scots. So, a few facts. He was born in Edinburgh in 1909 and named Robert Garioch Sutherland, though he became known to his readers as Robert Garioch. He "read English" (in my day we took it) at Edinburgh University and became a teacher in Primary schools, first in Edinburgh or near it and then, after service in the war, from 1946 to 1959 in London, of all places. He loathed teaching (not children) and returned to Edinburgh to work, from 1965, in the School of Scottish Studies as a "lexicographer's ornamant", until he died in 1981.

It says something not nice about Scottish publishers that his first substantial volume, the *Selected Poems*, didn't appear till 1966, though his poems were widely known in Scotland through little magazines and through his inimitable reading of them. At many poetry readings (in England, too) I've seen rows of glazed eyes light up when Garioch took the floor.

Why should that be so? It's easy to say that he had an unflagging comic gift - with which he could say very serious things. He wrote in the true vernacular, as opposed to mandarin - no singing robes, no egotistical sublimity. He hated the powers that be in the Church, in Parlia-

ment, in the Town Council, in the school - and was always on the side of what he horribly called the underprivileged. And, especially, he had that great gift of seeming to speak directly to the reader, without any distance between them.

You could say all these things about Burns. A difference, of course, is that Burns was a rural poet and Garioch very much an urban one - hence the common linking of his name with that of Robert Fergusson. And indeed he had a subtle and exact ear for Edinburgh Scots - not just the vocabulary, but the rhythms, idioms, syntax and tone, which give the poems their stubborn, natural reality.

He sent me to the dressmaker, that one,  
ny lang-chinned mistress, ken? her that's the  
weedic  
of Muccio, that dee'd twa month bygone  
efir a kick that he got frae a cudgyle.

I bet ye'll niver guess? Here's wha I'm sayin,  
the fuil's in murrin, luiks richt fuddy-duddy,  
and keeps, aside whatever war she's doin,  
a bicker wi' his ill-faured gizz, puir bodie.

That's the octet of a sonnet translated from the Italian of Giuseppe Belli (1791-1863), and it comes out as natural as conversation, which the original does, too. Garioch had nothing to learn about the techniques of verse writing, and, in fact, he liked to think of himself as a craftsman, a maker. An important part of Garioch's work is his translations of the author of that sonnet (and of 2,278 others), and this book contains sixty-eight more examples than were in the *Collected Poems*, published before he died. Belli wrote in Romanesco, a dialect of Italian spoken in Rome, as Garioch wrote in a dialect of Scotsolidly, but for from absolutely, based on Edinburgh speech - and good for

Donald Carne-Ross that he directed Garioch's attention to that remarkable poet, for they were very much alike in their temperaments and in their attitudes to the society they lived in. Belli could, I believe, be more bawdy than Garioch (who intended to tackle some of the bawdy sonnets all the same) and more savage. For Garioch, satirist as he was, had too much affection for people to be really ruthless. He was, indeed, a man with a malice, never mind hate. His weapon was mockery: real anger does come in, but the "reductive idiom" is his usual weapon, and it works fine.

I mustn't give the impression that Garioch and Belli were just a pair of comics. They had a sharp eye for the more unpleasant foibles of their friends and neighbours as well as a de- testation of those with the penicils and the power; and love, poverty, death, their frequent subjects, aren't to be joked about. Here is a Belli sonnet spoken with Garioch's voice, "The Pair Family" - and there are many others that show the same warm, human understand- ing and sympathy as this one does.

Wheesht nou, my darling bairnies, bide ye  
yir faither's comin soun, jist bide a wee.  
Oh, Virgin of the greelin, please help me,  
Virgin of wymenting, ye that can da'e!  
My haurts, I was that ye euid ken hou great  
my lave is! Dinnae greil, or I suld see.  
He'll bring us something hame wi' him, ye'll see,  
and we'll get some hield, and ye will eat.  
Whit's that ye're sayin, Joe? jist a wee while,  
my son, ye dinnae like the dark ava.  
Whit can I dae fir ye, if there's nae yie?  
Puir Lalla, whit's the matter? Oh my bairn,  
ye're eauld? But dinnae stand ugin the wae:  
come and I'll warm ye on yir mammy's airm.

There was, of course, a dark side to Garioch,

and there are many poems in which there is no comic element at all. Perhaps the most ambi- tious are "The Wire", a ghastly parable of con- temporary life clearly based on his experience as a prisoner-of-war, and "The Muir", an ex- traordinary discursive poem some thirteen pages long, in which he struggles against a forlorn and pessimistic view of life and of the sorts of truths science, physics particularly, supposes to be the salvation of everything. Not that Garioch despises such knowledge, but he ends where so many poets end: "Jehovah by the haill mairn nye he socht".

The mood of these poems recurs again and again - the feeling of being trapped, of wanting to break free, to escape from the crushing con- ventions and routines of a power-seeking, phi- listine, do-as-you're-told society where free- dom is one of the least understood of words. The editor of the *Complete Poetical Works*, Robin Fulton, has included a number of poems not previously collected in book form, found, after Garioch's death, in various notebooks. Some of these, Garioch would have tidied up a bit, or even excluded: but it's good to have them all the same. There are also translations from Greek, Latin, French, Gaelic, Swedish and another Italian (Vittorio Sereni), of such quality that one wishes he'd done more of them. The glossary has been expanded from that in the *Collected Poems*, but could well have been expanded a good deal more, and there are helpful notes on many of the poems.

This is a fine, solid collection with such variety and vivacity in both writing and feel- ing that it will prove to its readers that the "pleasure of poetry" is, after all, not an empty phrase. A splendid book - and beautifully pre- ducad as well.

# Improving on Broadway

Philip French

BERNARD F. DICK  
Hellman in Hollywood  
183pp. Associated University Presses. £14.95.  
0358631401

Lillian Hellman first went to Hollywood as the wife of the New York Jewish playwright Arthur Kober in 1930, and left two years later as the mistress of the West Coast Catholic novelist Dashiell Hammett. Kober got her a job as a \$50-a-week reader (or story analyst) at MGM, which gave her an education in screen- writing, and he probably taught her far more about dialogue than she has ever acknow- ledged, for though now largely forgotten, his *New Yorker* tales about life with the lower- middle-class Gross family in the Bronx and his plays reveal a remarkable ear for American demotic.

Hammett passed on to her his peculiar com- bination of bloody-minded individualism and left-wing politics, taught her a pared-down style of writing, and provided her with the plot source (*Bad Companions*, William Rou- geant's 1931 study of a famous early nineteenth- century Edinburgh libel action) for her first play *The Children's Hour*. He also immortal- ized their relationship (a matter not even touched on in this book) in Nick and Nora Charles, the wise-cracking, hard-drinking hus- band and wife detective team played in a series of *Thin Man* movies by William Powell and Myrna Loy.

The Broadway success of *The Children's Hour* brought Hellman back to Hollywood as a \$2,500-a-week writer for Samuel Goldwyn, an independent producer who persisted in engag- ing prestigious authors from other media after many disappointments, that included being let down by Maudie Maeterlinck (the tycoon is said to have fled from the writer's room screaming, "My God, the hero's a bee!") and snubbed by Bernard Shaw ("The troubles, Mr. Galsworthy, that you are only interested in art, and I am only interested in money"). Hellman got on well with Goldwyn and perhaps the most instructive aspect of this book is that the films that Hellman adapted from her own and other people's plays were much better than the stage versions. This leads us on to the larger proposition that despite the restrictions of the Hays Office Code and the constraints of the box-office, the product of Hollywood has generally been superior to that of Broadway from the early 1920s to the present-day.

Hellman's first assignment for Goldwyn was a re-make of a successful silent weeper, *Dark Angel*. Bernard F. Dick makes clear that she did a thoroughly professional job on this, pre- paring the way for an association that lasted for a further four pictures over eight years, two of them versions of her stage plays. The first, *The Children's Hour*, filmed as *These Three*, contrib- uted to the treasury of Goldwynisms. When one of his anxious executives said: "But Sam, we'll never get this script past Will Hays, the censors are Lesbians," the mercurial mogul replied: "So what's the problem? - make them Albanians."

*These Three*, *Dead End* and *The Little Foxes*, directed by William Wyler and photo- graphed by Gregg Toland, are minor classics. The fourth, *North Star* (1943), a tribute to our wartime Russian allies, brought Hellman's partnership with Goldwyn to an end. Wyler would have directed it, but he went into the army; Lewis Milsstone, a native of the Ukraine, took over; the picture was turned into a bowery epic with folksy music by Aaron Copland and near-parodic lyrics by Ira Gersh- win. The day *North Star* opened, the early scenes of Hearst's *New York Daily Mirror* said it was "a notable tribute to a notable ally". Later in the day a replacement review indicted it as "a pure bolshevik propaganda". Hellman, tor / his voice, slender along the telephone wire, "End here, it's hopeful", is the advo- cate from a McCough figure in "Poem for Elected Women", and while it is mostly resisted here, Dunmore's endings do betray uncertainty and sometimes incompetence. Many are forced and epigrammatic: "Still the lights splashing look beautiful", or "Your cigarette end does not brighten." If Dunmore overcame this, the pre- tor / her poems to the dreadful world and hackneyed title of the book would only be confirmed.

vities Committee. In 1957, the year after the Hungarian Revolution, Goldwyn re-issued *North Star* as *Armoured Attack* with a com- mentary and additional newsreel footage that turned it into an anti-Russian picture. In 1981, when questioned by Professor Diek, Aaron Copland could remember nothing about his involvement in the film.

After *North Star*, Hellman adapted her 1944 play *The Searching Wind* for Hal Wallis, who produced the film version of her *Watch on the Rhine* that Hammett had adapted under her supervision at Warner Brothers in 1943. Both were attacks on American isolationism that called for action in the anti-fascist struggle. But *The Searching Wind*, being set largely in Europe with a prevaricating American diplo- mat as its weak protagonist and a left-wing journalist as its moral heroine, offered a con- spectus on the twenty-five years of American foreign policy since the end of the Great War that went far beyond the Popular Front sim- plicities of *Watch on the Rhine*. It disappeared in the slough between World War II and the Cold War, and was her last film work for twenty years.

After refusing to sign a loyalty oath that would have given her an almost unpre- cedentedly lucrative writer-producer contract at Columbia in 1947, and then five years later taking the Fifth Amendment when called be- fore the House Un-American Activities Com- mittee, Hellman became a black-listed victim of McCarthyism. She could never have been quite as desperate as other Hollywood outcasts, and her stories of being reduced to working behind the counter at an unnamed New York department store don't quite ring true. She did translations (and was not above getting a pair of Harvard graduate students, one of them the future critic John Simon, to do some unac- knowledged donkey-work on her version of Anouilh's *The Lark*). Eventually she had a big success with her Broadway play *Toys in the Attic* in 1960, and after a lucrative film version of this, as well as a 1962 re-make of *The Children's Hour*, Hellman returned to Hollywood in 1966 as author of that hysterical Texas melodrama *The Chase*, a black-edged postcard "from Dallas with Malice", a refracted fable about the Kennedy assassination, that Sam Spiegel produced and Arthur Penn directed.

This was based on a somewhat primitive television play and novel by Horton Foote, and though the movie looks like pure Hellman (small-town gothic *Little Foxes* stuff) Dick has come across an unsigned 1959 screen adapta- tion that is virtually a blueprint for the final film. On the evidence of this he denies true authorship to Hellman. The fact that it bears no signature suggests that Spiegel was once again using a black-listed author: after all Dal- ton Trumfin of the original "Hollywood Ten" and scripted Spiegel's 1951 movie *The Frowler*; *The Bridge on the River Kwai* was the unre- dited work of Carl Foreman; and the prepara- tory treatment of *Seven Phyllos of Wisdom* had been done by Michael Wilson, though Robert Bolt took a single credit when *Lawrence of Arabia* appeared on the screen. It is just possi- ble, therefore, that Hellman herself did that 1959 script - this could explain why no one challenged her right to a sole credit when the picture appeared in 1966.

After *The Chase*, from which she dissociated herself (though not to the extent of removing her name from the credits) Miss Hellman turned to autobiography and establishing her- self as the conscience of the American intel- lectual world, and to promoting herself and Hammett as the responsible Scott and Zelda of the Depression Years. Her rather vague, fanciful memoirs were taken as fact, and the chapter "Julia" in *Penitents*, the central volume of the autobiographical trilogy, was snapped up by Hollywood, and eventually filmed to great acclaim by Fred Zinnemann in 1977, though the movie initially announced, that Nicolas Roeg was to direct from a screenplay by Harold Pinter, might have proved altogether more interesting.

This slick, dreamy movie sat the capstone to Hellman's reputation, uniting two of the most self-regarding, feminist presences in the Eng- lish-speaking cinema - Jane Fonda as Lilly and Vanessa Redgrave as Julia. Dick thinks the movie a masterpiece and after eight modest



Hellman arriving in Hollywood in 1935 to work as a screenwriter for Samuel Goldwyn, reproduced from the book reviewed here.

chapters of careful research and analysis of the other Hellman pictures, he breaks loose with a concluding chapter called "The Significance of Julia". It is as weak in the area of conjecture and judgment as his opening chapter is strained in the way it leads into the book through a corridor carpeted with protective academic argument.

One is indebted to him for demonstrating that the name of Miss Hellman's mother, Julia, recurs in her work (for example, a character added to the film of *The Little Foxes*, a major figure in the play *Days to Come*). But many critics, myself included, have expressed certain doubts about the identity and reality of "Julia", Lilly's teenage friend, the rich American socialist who fought the fascists in Austria, was murdered, and brought home to America by

the author. The story seems too much an amal- gam of themes in Hellman's own work and at- oke situations from Hollywood melodrama of the 1930s and 1940s.

It has now been established to most people's satisfaction - though Hellman has refused to comment on the matter - that the model for Julia was Muriel Gardiner, whose life and European underground activities uniquely match those of Hellman's heroine, except for two factors. The two women never met and Muriel Gardiner survived to write her recent autobiography *Code Name 'Mory': Memoirs of an American Woman in the Austrian Under- ground*. This puts a slightly different complex- ion on Dick's earnest discussion of Julia in the context of Hellman's life and integrity, though it does not necessarily undermine his claim that the film is a turning point in Hollywood's treat- ment of feminine friendship.

Perhaps nothing troubled the standing of Julia so powerfully as Stephen Spender's article on Muriel Gardiner's autobiography in the *London Review of Books* (July 7, 1983) where he revealed that in 1934 he had been Muriel Gardiner's lover in Vienna, and that she has appeared in his *World Within World* as the rich American socialist expatriate "Elizabeth". Spender's book might well have been one of Hellman's sources, for back in 1952, the year she appeared before HUAC, it was a key Cold War text for the Thirties Generation. Spender was drawn into his brief, heterosexual affair while visiting Vienna with his working-class Welsh companion, Jimmy Younger. The parallels between Spender's confessional text and Julia, irresistably suggest the possibility of an extraordinary Viennese comedy of the 1930s, scripted by Christopher Isherwood in the style of his Austrian movie extravaganza *Prater Violet*, called "Lilly and Julia and Stephen and Jimmy."

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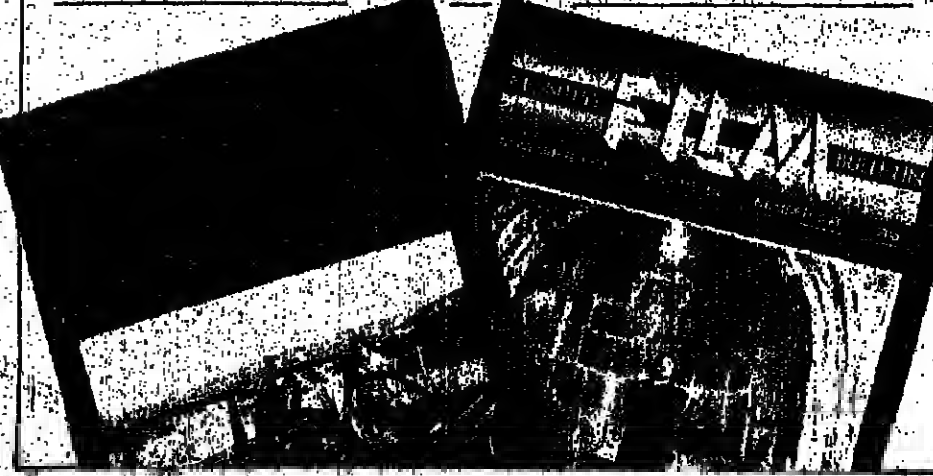
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# Roman reminders

Michael Hofmann

DAVID CONSTANTINE  
*Watching for Dolphins*  
94pp. £3.95.  
0906427 541

NOEL CONNOR and others  
*Tullio Cumi*  
Unnumbered pp. £2.95.  
0906427 535

HELEN DUNMORE  
*The Apple Fall*  
63pp. £3.50.  
0906427 436

Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe Books.

*Watching for Dolphins*, David Constantine's second book of poems, is agreeable, proficient and, at ninety-four pages, rather too long. My immediate response to it was perplexity and alienation. For the "classical mastery" achieved by Constantine, and extolled on the back cover, entails not only a classical manner and choice of subjects, but also an original

creative impulse whose nature is entirely un- modern, if not anti-modern. *Watching for Dol- phins* is as much a book of old poems as a book of new ones.

In saying this, I am not referring primarily to the twenty-three pages of the "Hymns" to De- meter and Aphrodite that bring up the rear of the volume, or to the archness of the "Mis- shapen women of the Fairhope Road Estate" whose breasts "are not discovered through a thin chiton", but to an ostensibly contemporary poem like "Sad Ends", which one could call a piece of Roman satire in English. In it, Con- stantine adopts the persona of a dusty academic praying for a dignified death for him- self - unlike those of some of his colleagues, who perished in the University equivalent to *La Grande Bouffe*:

our loving cup,  
The horn of an auroch, carefully raised up  
Stabbed harmless Lamb; and Mollinaux,  
Surprised by his servant and moistly clapping to  
Burke's *Cornucopia Pornographica*,  
Died with a sudden shout.

The jokes are good: the absurdity of the faint

praise of "harmless" and "modestly" in the moment of death; the ghost of a pun on "clap- ping"; the second fatal horn, concealed in "*Cornucopia*". However, the poem's language - it goes on, "Many are/ And various the ways to Hades" - and its superb rhetorical organiza- tion (Introduction, exposition, *exempli*, peroration), are an invitation to the reader to re-translate it. For surely it cannot have been composed in the vernacular?

The musty smut of "Priapics" and "Jour- neys" illustrates the same point: a literary car- bon-dating might reveal them to be two thousand years old, and so, in a sense, they are. Even the repeated irreverence of calling Zeus "o big noise" is not a disabused modern opin- ion: it too is antique. Constantine's Mediter- ranean figures, his Parsephone and his Lazarus, are boldly autonomous. There are very few poems that confront the classical with the mod- ern world, and the most notable of these, signifi- cantly, is the title-poem, in which our time falls to catch sight of that of Dionysus. Other poems may begin brazenly with "Listen" or "Children, attend", but in this one, there is no contact and no confidence:

We had not seen the dolphins  
But woke, blinking, Eyes cast down  
With no admission of disappointment, the company  
Dispersed and prepared to land in the city.

The formerly alien construction, "prepared to land in the city", and its clumsy sound - the ridiculous, ungainly walk of the earth-bound albatross - admit Constantine's own dis- appointment. Hence, perhaps, the fixity of his concentration throughout the rest of the volume on the classical world, for which he has forsaken the short and passionate manner of the poems of love and death that began and ended *A Brightness to Cast Shadows*. *Watching for Dolphins* is the work of a poet who is perhaps too much in control of himself, his talent, and his material.

*Tullio Cumi* is a poet-artist collaboration under the direction of Noel Connor. It includes an epigrammatic sequence by Constantine (also in his own new book) and some poems by Rodney Pybus, and accompanies them with graphics from Connor and Barry Hirst. The most illuminating and moving thing about it is the way it came about: an unborn child was killed in the womb by a ricocheted bullet in Ulster. To the Belfast artist Connor, this poet-

came a ghost of my conscience and much of my work became memorials to it". When, nearly afterwards, he became a father himself, he had a powerful claim on the libellous story of the miracle of the little girl risen from the dead. His speech, conceptual *pointillism*, with its pierced sense of texture, emerges with rather more credit than Hirst's technically initial flower-drawings, the rather cloudy lyricism of Pybus ("Wise artificer of silence, grasping for the lode of light"), and Constantine's - on this occasion - insufficiently Rilkean endeavour.

Helen Dunmore's first collection of poems is at its best when giving unadorned, unpre- tended accounts of quotidian experience. Mo- ments from childhood come to the surface un- announced, shorn of the historicizing, the dating and framing, that it would seem men go through. A poem such as "Ollie and Charles at St Andrew's Park" is like a private jotting, but it is fresh and satisfying: Daffodils break in the wintry bushes and Ollie and Charles in drab parkas run, letting us wait by the swings. Under caskins hoods their hair springs dim coloured, child-smelling.

The speaker is unwilling to differentiate be- tween the boys - or even to claim one of them as hers. We are left only with their two Chris- tian names, the one complete, the other abbreviated, confining oddly with the name of the park. It is an occasion, and presumably a pleasure, from which the watching mothers have been excluded - as they are in the title. The feeling of resentment - or in the abso- lute case, the refusal to resent - is an undertone throughout the book, sometimes erupting into humour or aggression, sometimes left as pathos, and sometimes, unfortunately, warped by over-anxiousness into pretension. "Zelda", shrill most of the way through, ends with a needless inversion and ellipse: "Her only wit- ness, needless inversion and ellipse: 'Her only wit- ness, tor / his voice, slender along the telephone wire.'" End here, it's hopeful", is the advo- cate from a McCough figure in "Poem for Elected Women", and while it is mostly resisted here, Dunmore's endings do betray uncertainty and sometimes incompetence. Many are forced and epigrammatic: "Still the lights splashing look beautiful", or "Your cigarette end does not brighten." If Dunmore overcame this, the pre- tor / her poems to the dreadful world and hackneyed title of the book would only be confirmed.

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## The screen as mirror

Paul Smith

JEFFREY RICHARDS and ANTHONY ALDGE  
Best of British: Cinema and Society 1930-1970  
170pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £12.50.  
0631 130187

Historians interested in the uses of film evidence are moving away from the scrutiny of newscast and documentary to that of the fiction film. The fiction or feature film is collectively produced for mass-consumption; it is what most people go to the cinema to see. Hence it seems to have special promise as an index of and influence upon the values and assumptions of its time. The avowed object in these studies of ten British films, from *Sanders of the River* (1935) to *... (1968)*, is to write "contextual cinematic history", looking not only at "what the film is saying" but at its genesis as a commercial product, at the social and political background to it, and at its reception by the public.

The purpose is admirable and the problems are daunting. Jeffrey Richards's introduction handily sets out what needs to be done but does not altogether face the difficulties inherent in doing it. His approach to the question of "what the film is saying" explicitly sets aside recent fashions in film theory, but it is not clear that the authors have any systematic method of film analysis to apply in their place. What the film "says" has in the main to be taken from what is in the script. The "story" is the message and its principal means of communication, the visuals are secondary to it and only casually discussed, and concentration on the more or less explicit excludes speculation about the subliminal. One does not have to be a structuralist or a semiotologist to wonder whether that is all there is to film. Historians have to stick to the evidence, and the evidence is what the film says.

The next problem about "contextual" ten with the help of film than that film study is

cinematic history" is that of establishing the context and the threads of relation between it and the films. Richards and Aldgate are following in the wake of O'Connor and Jackson's *American History/American Film*, rightly seen as a promising example of the application of empirical historical method to the assimilation of film into social and cultural history, but they are doing so apparently without the full resources available to their American pathfinders. Richard asserts that "the materials exist" for what he thinks historians ought to do but "lie unused", except in isolated cases like Charles Barr's study of Ealing Studios. Yet he and his co-author often seem to be scratching around for evidence, for example in an area crucial to their conception of what film represents, that of production. Where historians in Hollywood are now exploiting, say, the Twentieth-Century Fox archive or the Howard Hawks collection, Richards and Aldgate appear to have examined no studio records or producers' or directors' papers and give no indication whether such material is extant or accessible. Interviews are not used to fill the gaps, though they may be an unrewarding source, to judge by the two that are cited, with Ian Dalrymple and Roy Boulting, neither of whom seems to have said much. What little we do learn about the commercial matrix from which these celluloid gambles on public taste or attempts at public sentiment emerged derives mainly from memoirs and biographies, with some help from the records of the British Board of Film Censors. The one hint of revelation, when Richards shows that it is quite likely that in *Sanders of the River* Alexander Korda, as well as filing yet another set of imperial naturalization papers, was currying favour with the government via the egregious Joseph Ball, comes from Neville Chamberlain's correspondence. The context of public reception is still skimming, means little more than a round-up of

being pursued by reference to history. The films discussed are "chosen to represent subjects important to contemporary historians" and to illustrate the preoccupations of their time. No further criteria of selection are elaborated, and we end up with a somewhat random scatter which excludes the continuous tracing of topics and themes and the extended development of argument in favour of a string of isolated samples linked only by a common scheme of treatment. When an interesting point appears – and there are several – there is no chance of exploring it. Building on the work of Cook and Stevenson, Aldgate suggests, apropos of *South Riding*, that it makes poor sense to castigate British films of the 1930s for failing to reflect harsh social realities and conflicts (even to the extent that the censor permitted), when reality was pleasant enough for much of the population and there was an

underlying social cohesion that the cinema quite fairly reflected as well as sought to strengthen. Right or wrong, this is a proposition worth looking at in relation to a representative range of 1930s films, just as Jeffrey Richards's extension of Barr's tentative reading of *The Ladykillers* in terms of the stifling by native conservatism of the post-war Labour governments offers a line of enquiry which might be pursued through a series of 1950s features, but the format adopted here allows no such sustained analysis. The book's anxiety to find a sensible and profitable way of drawing on fiction film for the writing of history is very much to be welcomed, but if its aim is to demonstrate a method, there is little method on show; if it is to exhibit the richness of the source material, its selection is too limited; if it is to construct historical argument, its scheme is too fragmentary.

## Getting moving

Stephen Mills

JOHN BARNES  
The Rise of the Cinema in Great Britain: The Beginnings of the Cinema in England 1894-1901  
Volume 2, Jubilee Year 1897  
272pp. Bishopsgate Press. £16.50.  
0900873 515

"All the best kinetograph films are 'made in France'... a case which shouts aloud for reform, and there is no doubt it will get it very shortly." This rallying cry to English photographers was issued in Diamond Jubilee year by the writer and, later, producer, Cecil M. Hepworth. If effort is a measure of "reform" then his call was clearly heeded, for the year 1897, which is the subject of John Barnes's book, saw unprecedented cinematic activity in Britain.

While British technical efficiency improved rapidly, the French kept their edge. For one thing they had a head start in the nineteenth-century equivalent of video nasties. "It has come to our knowledge," observed *The British Journal of Photography*, "that unprinted photographs of a by no means objectionable kind are available in certain quarters". Those imports bore lurid titles like *A Bride Unraveling*, *A French Lady's Bath*, and *The Temptation of St Anthony*, an irregular number in which the hapless saint keeps finding his crucifix turning into a nude and ample full-frontal lady. Such diversions were said to be "immensely popular" in Paris, but in Britain they met with some reflections on the role of nudity in art. It was all right, apparently, provided it was not on the move.

With these strictures, avoiding moving objects might have become a specialty of the British movie pioneers. Indeed, while in France, Georges Méliès was producing extraordinary little docu-dramas about the Cretan-Turkish war and Messrs Lumière had amassed a catalogue of 300 hyperactive titles, Robert Paul, the founding father of English cinema, sent his cameraman off to film the Great Pyramids. Within months, however, movement was all the rage and the French comedies were being rivalled by, for instance, riveting sequences of the undistinguished actor Tom Green making grimaces and by films like *The Savage-Maker* which showed cats and dogs entering a machine at one end and emerging as sausages from the other. Even more popular were the "actualities", not only the "interminable street scenes" which Hepworth quickly came to complain about, but shots of the Derby, the University Boat Race and, of course, of football. According to Barnes, probably the very first football film was of a corner-kick staged by G. A. Smith between his gardeners at St Anne's Well, Brighton.

Live-action documentary soon revealed its occupational hazards. One photographer, trying to capture the end of a horse race from the Epsom Downs Hotel, had his equipment smashed by an irate Countess Starny. She apparently resented his presence on the balcony and although he had paid for his vantage point, the aristocratic displeasure was duly upheld by the local magistrate. But most people

loved the new medium and film sequences were shown in nearly every English town during the year. In fact, there was so much enthusiasm that Paul, who with Blit Acres had built the first British cine camera after the arrival of the Edison Kinetoscope in October 1894, was able to declare a profit for 1896-7 of £12,000, 15s and 4d.

There was a rush to design new machines and to adapt old ones, many of them combining the operations of camera, printer and projector. Mr Barnes examines each invention, dividing his attention between the four cities, London, Brighton, Bradford and, to a lesser extent, Leeds, where the leading engineers were concentrated. Like the Lumière Triograph, which was billed in the *West End* as "Microcosm of Manifold Marvels", this new crop of Cinematographs, Moto-Photographs, Kinetoscopes and Cinescopes, as they were variously called, all promised reliability and rock-steady frame lines.

Most of them, though, seem to have suffered from eye-splitting flicker. To counteract this, one enterprising French company, L. Gaumont et Cie of Paris, introduced "La Ombre" sort of film which was to be viewed gradually before the eyes while watching the scene. Capping French inventiveness with Yorkshire wit, R. J. Appleton, one of the leading Bradford movie moguls, produced his "Kinetograph scope". *Amateur Photographer* revealed that this device was nothing other than the viewer, hand, moved across his eyes "quickly but silently with the hope "that variations of the prescribed movement will not be noticed".

The main event of the year, which was, of course, a focus for all this ingenuity, was the Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. On June 22, all along the route of the Queen's procession, dozens of ungainly cameras were pointed at action by photographers from the Continent and America as well as all the leading British companies – Paul, Acres, the Post and Sons, Haydon and Urry Ltd, W. Wilson and Sons, Philipp Wolff, J. Wrench and Sons, and R. J. Appleton. This latter gentleman particularly distinguished himself since he Queen's procession, which was a moment when the Queen, raising her parasol and smiling, proved that she could, after all, be amused. He also managed to have his footage processed and shown in Bradford that same evening.

John Barnes has organized and edited the year's cinematic events with great care, making extensive reference to contemporary journals like *The Era*, *Opinion*, *Graphic*, *Journal* and *Photograph*, as well as to contemporary letters and advertisements. He has also made a series of volumes, to follow the lead of the end of Queen Victoria's reign, in the case of a gap which has so far existed in the history of British film will be all the more closed. If Barnes's own prose is neutral and plain, his eye for the appropriate and amusing quotation should save the book from

obscurity. Edited by David Wilson, with an introduction by Bevis Haller, *Projecting Britain: Studios Film Posters 67pp.*, BFI, 1983, £7.95, 0 85 170 122 1) documents a collection of posters from the 1940s and reproduces each one.

## Degeneracy incarnate

Geoffrey Nowell-Smith

RICHARD KOSZARSKI  
The Man You Loved to Hate: Erich von Stroheim and Hollywood  
343pp. Oxford University Press. £7.95.  
019 5033795

Erich "von" Stroheim was born Erich Oswald Stroheim in Vienna on September 22, 1885, to middle-class Jewish parents who had recently emigrated to the city. On November 25, 1909, he stepped off the boat in New York sporting the name of Erich Oswald Hans Carl Maria von Stroheim, replete with claims to a distinguished civil and military career in the Imperial service. Having assumed this identity he was never able to shake it off, but he was so successful an impersonator that the less glamorous truth was not discovered until after his death in 1957. It seems likely that he came to half-believe his own story – although, as Richard Koszarski relates in this new biography, he did have to invent some new lies to prevent his Catholic wife from meeting his parents in Vienna. Meanwhile the "von" stuck, so closely that his friends tended to call him Von rather than Erich. In many American books, this one included, he is called van Stroheim and indexed under V, although in European usage this is incorrect even for names entitled to the prefix.

## The great tradition

Colin MacCabe

JEAN-LOUP BOURGET  
Le cinéma américain 1895-1980: De Griffith à Cimino  
240pp. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.  
CNRS.  
2137074875

To write a history of Hollywood is to invite ridicule and criticism. It seems a straightforward task to treat the most popular art form of the twentieth century in a mere 200 pages. It would indeed be easy to take issue with Jean-Loup Bourget's very definition of American cinema. It is not only that Bourget simply identifies American cinema with Hollywood, more importantly he remains resolutely committed to the notion of the American film as an art form which transcends the very different forms of production and distribution which have constituted the history of Hollywood. And yet, the book is, in its own terms, extremely successful, and demonstrates that these film guides which abstract both directors and films from any social or historical context.

It is in this context which is the concern of the book to trace the development of Hollywood and its relation to the major political, social and cultural movements of twentieth-century America. Thus the history of Hollywood is presented against the backdrop of the history of America. Thumbs-thrust sketches of the crucial ideological debates of each decade are followed by a description of the major genres and films. This procedure, which could so easily fall into a very crude tactical scheme, is genuinely illuminating in its narrative. He never pretends that the history of the cinema or the meaning of any film can be exhausted by social or historical context, but he does show that any film which ignores such historical conditions is likely to be impoverished and

at the same time, the book offers few surprises. The 1930s are dominated by the Depression and the New Deal; the 1940s by film noir and war both hot and cold; the earlier trends, in future volumes, to follow the lead of the end of Queen Victoria's reign, in the case of a gap which has so far existed in the history of British film will be all the more closed. If Barnes's own prose is neutral and plain, his eye for the appropriate and amusing quotation should save the book from

obscurity. Edited by David Wilson, with an introduction by Bevis Haller, *Projecting Britain: Studios Film Posters 67pp.*, BFI, 1983, £7.95, 0 85 170 122 1) documents a collection of posters from the 1940s and reproduces each one.

Having acquired his first new identity, Stroheim set out for the West and for Hollywood, where he underwent further transmutation. He became an actor and performed a variety of roles as an all-purpose evil Teuton and – later – acted as the representative of an unsuspected seamy side of Ruritania. It was these roles that earned him the sobriquet, assiduously promoted by the studios, of "the man you love to hate". In 1919 he began to direct films, starting in two of them himself. His love-hate relationship with studios and public became more complex and intense. Every project he started mushroomed to extravagant proportions and had to be viciously cut back again. Even Irving Thalberg could not tame him. But again and again he was allowed to start work, and his very extravagance was turned by publicity departments into a selling point for the film – as was the likelihood that the film would be as hateful as the stage persona of its maker.

Hardly a single film of his survives today in a form approaching the one he had intended to give to it. His films were butchered by studio hacks (*Greed*, the most famous, was cut from forty-five reels to ten); or else he found his projects aborted before completion (as happened with the extraordinary *Queen Kelly*). The real mystery (and tragedy) of Erich von Stroheim lies here – not in the banalities of his assumed persona and name, but in the fact that



Greta Garbo and Erich von Stroheim in *As You Desire Me* (1932), directed by George Fitzmaurice and based on a play by Pinandello.

it is now impossible to summon up the evidence with which to determine whether he was the great artist he set out to be or just a mad "artistocrat" who drove his friends and colleagues to distraction and nearly drove a major studio to bankruptcy.

Mr Koszarski has evaluated all the known evidence and unearthed evidence previously unknown. *The Man You Loved to Hate* is, near enough, a definitive biography, though the author does not claim it as such and there will doubtless be people who will still want to contest his version of events. It is a sympathetic and even affectionate account, particularly where it comes to the conflicts between Von and the studios. But as the narrative proceeds and disaster is piled upon disaster, issues are raised which seem to require more careful scrutiny than a biographical and chronological approach allows, for example, difficulties which occur owing to the sociological anomaly of a film director's position both as an "artist" and as a company employee. In general "artists" are allowed to have extravagant imaginations, provided this extravagance is materially confined to not too many pages of paper or square feet of canvas (which they pay for themselves). But when the extravagance can only express itself in material realization, and this realization involves the signing of company cheques to obtain the services of builders and carpenters, to expose miles of film stock, to keep hundreds of extras working through the night, and when all this money has to be borrowed from a bank and then "realized" in its turn at the box-office, what status can artists be allowed to have? Stroheim, it seems, needed – or claimed he needed – not only to realize certain affects but to realize the conditions which would produce those affects. To make his actors sweat he had to make them sweat,

and he transported them hundreds of miles, to Death Valley where they sweated in temperatures of 130 degrees Fahrenheit. This devotion to "realism" was supported, apparently, by belief in the philosophy of Naturalism – not just the aesthetic, but the whole spectrum of ideas about the determining power of heredity and environment, including a more than implicit racism. This is something we need to pause over longer than Koszarski allows us to do. Why should such ideas have effect, and effect on a man whose own life seemed designed to disprove them, in that he had successfully discarded his heredity and was only play-acting the "degenerate" aristocrat that he presented in his life and his films? In discussing the films, too, or what is left of them, the author makes a number of tantalizing observations that one would like to see developed. Particularly interesting is the way that the films are shown to portray doppelgangers, where sometimes two characters can be as it were positive and negative images of each other, and sometimes one character splits into two opposing sides. Without the completed films to refer to it is difficult to speculate on how important this is as a feature of Stroheim's work. It is even more difficult to relate it coherently to the man and his various real or imagined personas, and it may be that Koszarski was right not to venture too far into such speculation, fascinating though it would be. Perhaps, too, many readers may prefer not to get sucked into the maelstrom of Stroheim's tragic failures and to remember him for roles which gave him dignity and success. In 1937 he played the German aristocrat von Rauffenstein in Renoir's *La Grande Illusion* and with very modest means – a single geranium – was able to establish an echo of an authorial presence within Renoir's film which he had never achieved in his own.

## The cutting-room gnome

Eric Rhode

DAI VAUGHAN  
Portrait of an Invisible Man: The working life of Stewart McAllister, film editor  
210pp. BFI Publishing. £4.95.  
0851 701477

Stewart McAllister was a film editor of exceptional acuity – "a perfectionist", claimed Harry Watt, who worked with him on *Target for Tonight*. The son of a well-to-do chocolate manufacturer, McAllister studied to be a painter at the Glasgow School of Art. He became a close friend of Norman McLaren, a cartoon film maker of sparkling originality, and together they explored the possibility of using film as *matière*. Once they dabbed oil paint onto the celluloid itself, the result, a frenzy of moving blots. Dai Vaughan thinks this sort of experiment encouraged McAllister to take risks in film editing, to attempt the unusual, memorable image, or bold, irrational juxtaposition worthy of Eisenstein.

McAllister joined the GPO Film Unit in the late 1930s, and so became acquainted with, and a close friend of, the Unit's leading light, John Gielgud. In the sense that he put himself on being slighted, he was naturally a retiring sort of man. He lived in the cutting-room, working by night, sleeping by day, a gnome, a curiosity, curled up on the floor, his head pillowed on two tins of film. He died, in 1962, at the age of forty-eight. Dai Vaughan quotes friends who think he was burnt out by why no one is sure.

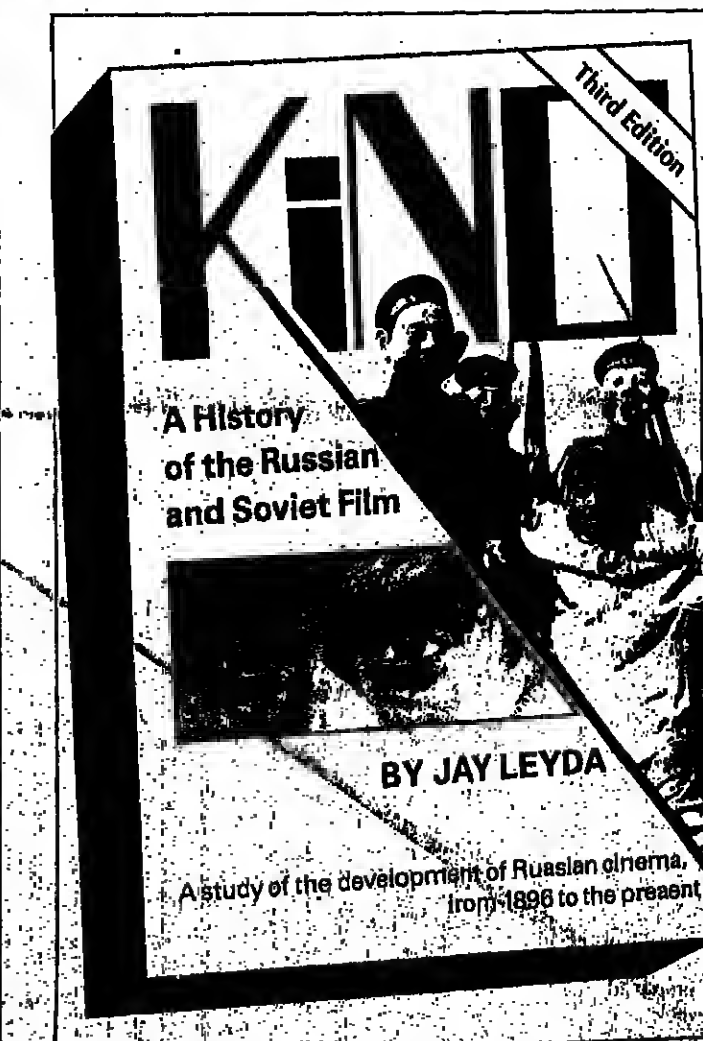
He had violent, abstracted yearnings for girls who declined to respond. He was a defeated bachelor. He was passionate about his craft and quite lost to it. For most of the time, he had no interest in reputation or self-advancement. Vaughan, a film editor himself, has McAllister's love for the hermetic, insular process of putting together a film. He is excited by the idea of a group of people working together in isolation, whether in the GPO sorting out of *Night Mail*, or in the splendidly

*Listen to Britain*, or in the Pinewood cutting rooms during the Blitz, surrounded by barbed wire and an impossible system of passes. He describes McAllister, at work, carressing bits of film, re-playing them ceaselessly on his Moviola, keeping them as unviolated fragments until the last moment, when he would brilliantly tessellate them.

Cutting-room camaraderie, like war-time camaraderie, is based on often having a shared enemy. The equivalent of the Axis in this case were film directors, film critics and producers who made money. Vaughan shares this hostility. He is critical of Jennings in many ways, and often his criticisms are misinformed (as in his belief that Jennings was rich). He insists – unconvincingly – that a cinema of technicians must be opposed to individualism and to the idea of the artist. He recognizes that Jennings had an interest in European as well as in British culture, and he does not like it.

But, fortunately Vaughan allows praise to seep in. He writes enthusiastically about *Listen to Britain* and defends *A Diary for Timothy* against some lengthy, negative, detractors, even though McAllister had no part in its making. *Portrait of an Invisible Man* reads as though it began as a eulogy of Jennings, but then moved into the more polemical stance of "putting McAllister against Jennings on the grounds that McAllister's public reputation was somewhat flattered by Jennings. There is no clear evidence for this. On the contrary, Jennings insisted that McAllister share equal credits with him on *Listen to Britain*.

This is not the principal issue. Jennings' reputation remains untouched and indeed enhanced by the presence of McAllister. Dai Vaughan has done some impressive research into his subject and illuminated a corner of film history. His account of the breeding working conditions of the GPO and (later Crown) Film Units explains some of the ingrained bitterness. If Jennings was prepared to stay with the Unit for 28 a week, writes a government administrator in 1938, "he is not a very high content now, with all and then a no-nonsense attitude".



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# The jet-propelled millionaire

Douglas Johnson

PIERRE ASSOULINE  
Monsieur Dassault  
380pp. Paris: Balland. 79fr.  
27158 04067

Naturally, this is a success story. The thirteen-year-old Marcel Bloch, at the Lycée Condorcet in Paris, drew strange shapes which looked like giant birds with engines attached to them. In 1910, at the age of eighteen, when a student at the École Supérieure des Arts et Métiers, he saw Latham's plane after it had just flown round the Eiffel Tower and became passionately interested in aircraft. More than seventy years later, under the name of Marcel Dassault — which he had adopted after the Second World War — it was he who controlled and dominated the French aeronautical industry. He was, and remains, a multi-millionaire whose empire extends to much more than aircraft, into the press, banks, property, electronics, the cinema, an agricultural and forestry company, even a vineyard (Château-Dassault). The number of companies and sub-companies which he controls is such as to defy any simple evaluation. It is said that there are only two men in the world who know the extent of his stock-holdings.

Dassault is the richest man in France, and while the Gaullists ruled the Fifth Republic there was a tendency to refer to him as "le milliardaire du régime". The story goes that he walks up the Champs Élysées on a Sunday he will stop in front of a newspaper stall and buy a copy of his own magazine, *Jours de France*, pointing out as he does so that the magazine is not well displayed, and asking for a rearrangement so that it will be seen to better advantage. Then he will pay with a 500-franc note and not wait for the change. "With money," he is said to have remarked, "one can do anything."

And he has done it. He has built up an empire to sign the agreement with the Prime Minister, he is supposed to have given 500 francs to the attendants who opened the doors for him. Indeed, at one point it looked as if Dassault might give the same sum to Pierre Mauroy himself. That, he simply said to the Prime Minister, "vous avez été très gentil pour moi", a remark which Mauroy has never understood. Was it genuine? Was it sarcastic? As one expects with multi-millionaires, Dassault is enigmatic and eccentric, though never allowing either characteristic to affect his wealth or his power. He dislikes publicity, but from time to time he backs shyly into the limelight, as when he takes a whole page in a news-

paper in order to explain, in dialogue form, his ideas upon some subject of general interest. These "Chroniques du Café du Commerce" must be the most expensive editrinks now published in France. (They have recently been adapted into a play by a young dramatist with a sense of humour; it is not yet known whether or not Dassault has claimed his author's rights.)

It is true that fortune favoured Marcel Bloch. His father, Adolphe, was a highly respected general practitioner from Strasbourg, who lived and worked in the ninth arrondissement. His mother was from a renowned Jewish family, the Allatini, and through her relations he knew the Camondo, and through them, the Rothschilds, the Foulds, the Worms de Romilly, the Cahens d'Anvers and other aristocrats of the Jewish community. He was brought up in an atmosphere of intelligent conversation; one brother became a general and another a surgeon. He married the sister of one of his school friends, Madeleine Hirtz-Minkès, from a family that was well known around the faubourg Saint-Antoine and in the furniture business.

But, as Pierre Assoulène's excellent biography points out, things were not always easy. Dassault has also experienced his share of disappointments and difficulties. The first aeroplane he produced with his earliest associates, Potez and Coroller, began to come from the assembly lines at Angers on November 11, in 1918, the day of the armistice. He was told that the ending of the war meant that no one had any use for aeroplanes and he therefore turned to his father-in-law's business, to property speculation and even, for a time, to motor-cars ("Bloch carrosserie grand sport"). When, in 1929, he determined to return to aircraft, he found that others had got in before him (including his former associate, Potez). It was a market dominated by intrigue, politics and technical uncertainties. Dassault was not at all a technical man, but he was a man of vision.

He was therefore natural that the Socialist victory of 1981 should bring about the nationalization of Dassault. This was not at first seen by Dassault himself as a catastrophe, since an earlier nationalization in 1936 had left him in full charge of his factories and provided him with a large indemnity, so enabling him to set up a number of private businesses which worked with the state-owned firm. But any hope that this arrangement would be repeated in 1981 was quickly dashed. Although Dassault retains a privileged position within his former empire, and although the idea of complete nationalization was abandoned in favour of the state acquiring a majority holding, he apparently emerged the poorer by millions of francs.

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He may have been small, but he trained his body to the point where he achieved circus agility on a trapeze, and he was an excellent wrestler. Under his original name of Julien Marie Viaud, he had a most distinguished career as a naval officer, and he must have been the only member of the Académie Française to have also been appointed, six months after his election, to command a gunboat. He may have been small, but he trained his body to the point where he achieved circus agility on a trapeze, and he was an excellent wrestler. Under his original name of Julien Marie Viaud, he had a most distinguished career as a naval officer, and he must have been the only member of the Académie Française to have also been appointed, six months after his election, to command a gunboat. He may have been small, but he trained his body to the point where he achieved circus agility on a trapeze, and he was an excellent wrestler. Under his original name of Julien Marie Viaud, he had a most distinguished career as a naval officer, and he must have been the only member of the Académie Française to have also been appointed, six months after his election, to command a gunboat.

M. Assoulène tells us that in this biography he has received no help from Dassault himself. He has had to rely on information which Dassault has given in several interviews, and on conversations with a number of his friends and associates, notably Collero, Marcel Paul and Lucien Ledru. For the 1930s he has researched in a number of archives, but Assoulène is the first to admit that there will be a great deal more to say when Dassault's private papers are available to historians. From this book we learn nothing about his post-1945 political contacts, with de Gaulle for example, or with René Mayer, and little enough about his contacts in the 1920s (except for a stray reference to the deputy René Binet and to a mysterious Alphonse, actually a well-known family from eastern France).

What is not clear is Assoulène's own attitude to his subject. He repeats the stories that Dassault's enemies used to tell about him, such as that when he visited the workshops of his rivals he would wear crepe soles so that samples of the materials used would stick to his feet, and that inside the overcoat which he constantly wore there was a set of rulers with which he could take rapid and secret measurements. When he walked around his own establishments, in the inter-war period, if he saw a workman whom he didn't like the look of, the unfortunate was supposedly sacked immediately, and we are told here that even today, at *Jours de France*, a journalist or printer who is bearded or who sports over-prominent moustaches, is likely to suffer from the disapproval of a patron who remains a patriarch.

More seriously perhaps, Assoulène compulsively avoids describing Dassault even his failures with certain prototype aeroplanes, over the financial exploitation of his position after the 1936 nationalization, over his insistence upon making himself indispensable to the state. Assoulène cultivates, rather than terminates, certain mysteries that surround Dassault, such as the strange and criminal behaviour of his accountant Vethaire (which almost became "une affaire Vuthairegate"). He only expresses unqualified admiration when he is writing about the war and the occupation, when Dassault shined the experience of many Jews ("on bloque les coffres, on coffre les Bloch", as Tristan Bernand put it). Otherwise Assoulène sees Dassault as someone who has accomplished a great deal in his effort simply to build being bored. One wonders whether this makes for an adequate understanding of a remarkable entrepreneur who, in his person, has assured the continuity of the notoriously backward France of the 1920s with the much-valued technological marvels of the 1980s.

Or with the women who thought that the hero wasn't exactly the fairest way of arranging relationships between the sexes. Yet it would seem, although Blanch does not tell us much about the people who read his books, that it was his rather limited world-view which explained a certain amount of his appeal. With Loti, you knew where you were — in an exotic abroad — and she admits to sharing the view that his travel books are better than his novels. But since her intention is primarily to write the life of a man who moved from the most austere and claustrophobic of Huguenot family backgrounds to become the great best-selling author of sexual romances, she does not go into the reasons either for his immense popularity or for his equally dramatic decline.

This is surely a pity, since Loti's life, for all his literary success, was an unhappy one, with his constant search for a lost love, his apparent inability to keep friends, his barely repressed homosexuality. If anyone doubts that this was the way his imagination worked, they should look at the extremely competent drawings of Loti's women, which he supplemented his travel journals — his obsessive fear of death, and his total inability to treat other people as equals. This excellent biography reads for much of the time like a very good novel about an interesting, if not a very happy man, it is partly because of a relatively little in about Loti's books, but also because its author has such a genuine sympathy with his subject.

# In the mind's eye

Thomas Nagel

COLIN MCGINN  
The Subjective View: Secondary Qualities and Indexical Thoughts  
164pp. Oxford University Press. £11 (paperback, £5.95).  
019 824696X

Perception is inevitably coloured by the point of view and sensory constitution of the perceiver, and the world it reveals is described partly in terms of secondary qualities like sound, smell, or colour, and indexicals like "this", "here", "now", and "I". At the same time we perceive primary qualities like shape, size and motion which are independent of our minds. In *The Subjective View* Colin McGinn examines the relation between these two aspects of the physical world, their inseparability in perception and their separability in thought. Our direct apprehension of the world involves a particular perspective that is ineliminable, but this does not infect all our ideas with subjectivity. We also have a conception of reality that is independent of any perspective, a conception in which neither indexicals nor secondary qualities figure. Indexicals are discussed throughout, and there are some interesting remarks about value at the end, but I shall concentrate on McGinn's treatment of secondary qualities.

He maintains, convincingly, that it is an *a priori* truth about any secondary quality that it is a secondary quality and not mind-independent. What makes things red is simply that they look red, what makes them sweet is that they taste sweet; that is what we mean by "red", "sweet", etc. Science has therefore not revealed, as some philosophers think, that contrary to common belief physical objects don't really have colours and tastes. There is no conflict between the physical conception of objects in terms of mind-independent primary qualities and the ascription to those same objects of secondary qualities which are essentially relative to the human perspective. Only a naive philosophical view inconsistent with our ordinary

concepts would hold those properties to be absolute. Indexical properties and secondary qualities constitute "a subjective grid contributed by the mind" to the world of appearance, and do not purport to fit what is objectively present in the world independently of the mind.

McGinn denies that the property of being red can be identified with a physical property (even if there were a single one) that causes things to appear red to us under normal circumstances. Redness isn't an objective physical property at all, but a perceiver-relative one. Though this seems right, his specific analysis of the relativity is not plausible. He holds that being red consists in looking red to perceivers under normal conditions; (for our word "red" the perceivers are human beings). But nothing can have that disposition if there are no such perceivers, and nothing had it before there were any perceivers. It follows that if we did not exist or were all blind, rubies would not be red — and that they weren't red before the appearance of sentient beings. McGinn accepts this conclusion (with signs of uneasiness) because he sees no other alternative to the position that red is a physical property.

But there is an alternative. Redness might be what could be called a *disposition in reality*: the property that anything (actual or possible) has if and only if it is such that it would look red to us in the actual world — the world as it actually is. Rubies have always had this property and would have it even if we were all blind or physiologically altered, or even if there had never been any sentient beings — so on this account they would still be red under such conditions. The analysis would therefore avoid McGinn's break with ordinary language with respect to counterfactual situations. (It is not the same as Kripke's view that a disposition is used to fix the reference of "redness" to a physical property that causes things actually to appear red to us. There may be no one such physical property, and anyway there may be possible kinds of red things that don't appear in this world at all.)

# On getting to know

Paul Snowdon

D. W. HAMLYN  
Perception, Learning and the Self: Essays in the Philosophy of Psychology  
311pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £14.95.  
07109 52644

In *Perception, Learning and the Self* D. W. Hamlyn has brought together sixteen of his post-1970 papers, adding no Introduction which points up a deep unifying theme. The papers are divided into three groups; the first four essays deal with perception, the next six deal with learning and knowledge; and the final group concentrate on a cluster of important psychological notions, such as self-deception, self-knowledge and love.

The sub-title is appropriate. In at least two ways. First, if by the philosophy of psychology we understand, not a subject distinct from psychology itself, but rather the relatively non-experimental part of that subject. Hamlyn's philosophical psychology is of two sorts. In some of the papers he expounds and criticizes certain aspects of the theories of experimental psychologists proper, such as Gibson, Piaget and Skinner. He tries to display contradictions or oversights in them. For example, in one paper the behaviourists are criticized for applying the notion of conditioning to quite dissimilar phenomena, and in another Gibson is criticized for failing to explain the internal side of our perceptual capacities. In these papers Professor Hamlyn relies, quite legitimately, on his own observations and good sense to locate the weak points of his targets, and he displays a commendable acquaintance with the scientific theories he discusses.

The other papers concern, not so much experimental theories, but "extant psychological notions" and Hamlyn's aim is to articulate the conditions of their application to a relatively little in about Loti's books, but also because its author has such a genuine sympathy with his subject.

perception and understanding, which no one hesitates about applying. There are, second, notions like that of unconscious intentions, which have their opponents but which Hamlyn argues can be made sense of. And, third, there are some notions — Hamlyn instances that of the *development* of reasoning ability — which, although in use, he alleges to be unsatisfactory. In all these cases Hamlyn can be viewed as asking a question of the form he claims all philosophical questions fall under, namely, "How (if at all) is so and so possible?" Among the conclusions he reaches are these: that only agents can be perceivers; that only creatures in social relations with other psychologically endowed subjects can have knowledge; and that we can only fully understand a person with whom we stand in a personal relation. Hamlyn's view is that these are *a priori* truths, recognizable by reflection on the concepts in question.

The second sense in which Hamlyn's essays deal with the philosophy of psychology is the sense in which the philosophy of a subject comprises its leading ideas, its basic assumptions. Hamlyn says that the unifying theme of the essays is their demonstration of the inadequacy of the "information-processing model" for cognitive psychology. This model, he claims, is adopted by many students of cognition but it needs to be deposed; cognitive psychology needs a new philosophy.

When Hamlyn is discussing what role intention can be said to play in perception, or whether appeal to the notion of conditioning is explanatory, or whether there are certain types of beliefs a person must have about an item he loves, his treatment is clear, penetrating and solid. From these, I, at least, learnt a lot. However, it also seems reasonable to feel certain reservations about both those essays that contain more abstract analytical claims, and about the unifying theme.

A recurring motif in Hamlyn's *a priori* analysis of the requirements for the presence of knowledge or understanding is that the knower

If this is right then the subjective grid imposed on the world by perceiver-relative secondary qualities is imposed on all possible worlds that we can conceive, not only on the actual world or other possible worlds in which we are beings like us exist. The same is true of indexicals. I can say, pointing to Gibraltair, "That rock would be here now even if conscious life had never evolved."

McGinn holds that there are laws of subjectivity which govern what is possible and what is necessary in a first-person perspective. While some of his examples — "I am here now", "I am not you", etc. — are plonking, others are more substantial. The old puzzle about why nothing can be both red and green all over is treated in terms of subjective necessity. Nothing can simultaneously look both red and green to the same perceiver — we cannot imagine what it would be like — and since what normally looks red is red and what normally looks green is green, nothing can be both red and green. It is also true, of course, that nothing can look both round and square, but that is because nothing can be both round and square (in necessity of ontology, not of phenomenology), and because of some non-trivial fact about the representation of shape in visual experience. Not every geometrical impossibility entails a corresponding phenomenological impossibility — the drawings of Escher provide numerous counterexamples.

Another law of subjectivity, emphasized by Berkeley, is that there cannot be perception of primary qualities without perception of secondary qualities — for example we can't see shape without seeing colour. This seems to be true, but is it a necessary truth? In considering it, McGinn blurs the distinction between secondary quality impressions and perception of the secondary qualities of objects. Perhaps colour experiences are necessary to the visual perception of shape; but what if the colour impressions produced by objects weren't regular enough to allow us ever to ascribe a true colour to an object, as opposed to our current impression of it? Whatever its form, the inseparability is difficult to account for. McGinn tentatively

suggests an explanation in terms of the intentionality of perception: "Perception results from the coming together of a prior mental constitution and an objectively determined world; secondary qualities are what cross the interface. The subjective component of perceptual content establishes an internal relation between outer and inner; the objective component cannot do this on its own, because it relates wholly to what is outer." This feels right, even if it is obscure.

Rejecting Berkeley's use of the inseparability thesis to support idealism, McGinn maintains that we can conceive of primary qualities apart from secondary qualities even if we cannot perceive the one without the other. An imagist theory of concepts is wrong. This means that the purely objective or absolute conception of the world (free of both secondary and indexical properties) is not a perceptual picture and the scientific standpoint is not even a possible perceptual standpoint. The world as it is in itself, nonsubjectively and nonrelatively, cannot be perceived by anyone, and an imagist theory of concepts is wrong.

McGinn adds that for this reason a being who had no perceptual experiences and thought only about objective reality (if it were possible) would not have the kind of subjectivity that creates special difficulties for physicalism. This seems doubtful. Even if such a being ascribed no subjective properties to the world in thought, it would still have to have those thoughts in some subjective form, either symbolic or pictorial, to be a mind at all. Otherwise what would make it true that the being was thinking eg. about the structure of the solar system? Intentionality requires subjectivity in thought as it does in perception — even if not in its objects.

The preface acknowledges that *The Subjective View* has the style "of an extended article; unself-contained, exploratory, inconclusive". It really could have cooked a bit longer. Nevertheless it's stimulating to think about, because it presents important problems with clarity, concision and philosophical immediacy.

These remarks were designed to illustrate the less than convincing nature of one of Hamlyn's bolder analytical claims. The overall unifying theme, the attack on the "information-processing model", suffers from the absence of any full account of what exactly that model implies, and so of what exactly should count against it. Thus Hamlyn claims that perception involves what might be called a sensory, aesthetic element, and that this is a difficulty for the model. But why suppose that these elements cannot be profitably characterized within such a model?

It is valuable, however, to have D. W. Hamlyn's essays collected together. Their range is impressive, and they contain much to interest, and to infuriate, workers in a variety of philosophical areas.

# The CRITICAL REVIEW

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XXV — 1983

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# The way of attrition

Edward N. Luttwak

NIGEL HAMILTON  
Monty: Mstr of the Battlefield 1942-1944  
842pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95.  
0241 111048

The story of Hamilton and Montgomery is by now well known, certainly to the readers of the former's *Monty: The Making of a General 1887-1942* (1981): the twelve-year-old boy befriended by the world-famous but lonely Field-Marshal grows up to become his official biographer. In this, the second volume of the biography, Nigel Hamilton insists that his aim is the truth, not hagiography, but plainly he is still bedazzled by that first boyish encounter, and infinitely proud of the intimate friendship that lasted until Montgomery's death. In a preface note, he sees fit to quote a 1970 letter from Montgomery which begins "Nigel my dear", and maintains a very personal tone ("You and I have been through a great deal together. . . . You can unbend your soul to me, and I will listen with love. . . ."), before ending with the (characteristically) incongruous juxtaposition:

With all my love,  
Montgomery of Alamein

The second volume repeats the stylistic vices of the first: the hagiographic undertones persist and so does the jarring intimacy with which the writer treats his subject's personal life (Montgomery is not so much criticized as actually scolded for mishandling his son's schooling - a son who is now the author's friend). Also abundant once again are the long, rambling quotations, where a few words would do. When it comes to substance it is not the hagiography we encounter but rather the lawyer: while perfectly ready to criticize Montgomery's vanity, Mr Hamilton presents an uncompromising brief for his client on each controversial military decision.

pace is right: it is the others who have unrealistic daydreams about speedy advances that are in fact impossible.

Remarkably, the lawyer's brief covers even the crossing into Italy: when Montgomery insisted on elaborate preparations and much shipping, even though the two-mile width of the straits made it more of a river-crossing than a true amphibious landing - the crucial difference being that artillery on the Sicilian side could provide all necessary fire support on the Calabrian side, thereby eliminating the greatest logistic obstacle to any amphibian operation (artillery and mortar ammunition accounts for the bulk of the tonnage). And Hamilton is just as insistent in justifying Montgomery's artillery barrage against the city of Reggio Calabria in the landing zone - which was predictably empty of Germans. When a reconnaissance party reported back that no

opposition was to be expected, Montgomery sent five more parties; when these failed to report back in time, Montgomery proceeded with the barrage he had planned all along, for which the artillery of three divisions, eighty medium guns and forty-eight heavies had been assembled.

Hamilton is even prepared to defend the agonizing slowness of Montgomery's advance up the boot of Italy towards Salerno, where Clark's landing was in trouble from the start. Montgomery's Eighth Army landed on September 3 and Clark went in on September 9, on the calculation that in six days the British advance would be threatening the southern flank of any German resistance against his forces (whose landing zone was hemmed in by mountains). As it was, Montgomery kept worrying about the danger of a German counter-offensive against him and kept pushing to consolidate even though he was only meeting the most feeble resistance. As a result, the German flank at Salerno was not endangered at all for two full weeks, and Clark's landing remained in acute danger all the while. But even here Hamilton admits no criticism of his hero.

The ease with which Hamilton's work can be criticized does not define its value, however. The general reader should find the book very satisfying: it is as easy to read as the average bestseller, and far more educative than most. First, the author's privileged access to all of Montgomery's unpublished papers has been well used: we are given a richly detailed account of Montgomery's view of events. Hamilton's reconstructions of Montgomery's "decision-making horizon" at each juncture seem most persuasive. The author's habit of inserting brief "retrospectives" in his description of how things stood at each remove entails repetition that could easily have been tiresome but here the device works very well. We constantly see the events of 1942-44 in the context of the earlier years of failure, or Montgomery's certain view of his own role in retrospect.

ment on that battle. Had there been some other resounding victory before it, then indeed one could say that El Alamein should have been fought much more boldly, to allow a far more complete exploitation. As things were, Montgomery's systematic over-insurance was exactly appropriate for that one battle at least: the greater assurance of a victory on the battlefield was worth the price of a delayed victory in the theatre as a whole. The persistence of the same extremes of prudence in the aftermath is of course another matter.

Second, the book defines very precisely the scope and limits of Montgomery's generalship. Hamilton concedes that his hero was no strategist, and provides full evidence for his verdict. In fact Montgomery could scarcely understand the war he was fighting at the higher levels of strategy, where the claims of several theatres had to be balanced and where the

forces in contention belonged to diverse nations. But he had a very clear appreciation of theatre strategy, where opposed forces face one another within a given geographic area. Of course Rommel was even less strategic than Montgomery: had Rommel been competent at the level of theatre strategy, he could not have enthusiastically advocated the invasion of the Nile Valley, a venture that remained throughout a logistic impossibility.

But Rommel was much more than merely competent at the next level of warfare in the strategic hierarchy, the operational level (Liddell Hart's "grand tactics"), which stands above the tactical and below the strategic, and where the actions of diverse forces interact, offering scope for large-scale stratagems of high-risk but high "pay-off" warfare. Montgomery virtually ignored the operational level - which was only natural given his emphasis on attritional warfare. When victory is to be achieved by attrition, ie, by the cumulative destruction of the enemy's forces, the aim of planning and command is to muster the greatest possible quantum of firepower and then to apply it with maximum efficiency. Everything that manoeuvre requires, from deception to obtain surprise to the circumventing action that is supposed to disrupt the enemy's plans and forces, inevitably conflicts with the orderly gathering of resources and their straightforwardly efficient application upon the enemy.

Montgomery's strong bias in favour of attrition diminished his operational scope in corresponding degree, to yield highly organized, rigidly pre-planned operations of low risk but equally of low pay-off. The fundamental difference between the two styles of war that happened to collide in the Western desert emerges most clearly when we compare the attitude of the two commanders towards uncertainty. For Montgomery uncertainty was the great evil, to be reduced as much as possible by the abundant use of resources, by very detailed advance planning and strict command discipline. His aim was to win his battle while sleeping in his caravan, relying on the thoroughness of his preparations and on detailed advanced planning. Obviously this method of command meant that no advantage could be taken of war's fleeting opportunities, while only a net superiority in resources could provide protection from war's sudden dangers. For Rommel, the "fog of war" was a most valuable resource, to be maximized by deception and fast movement, in order to set the stage for the opportunistic manoeuvre that would disrupt the plans and the very structure of the enemy forces.

It was at the next level down, at the level of tactics, that Montgomery's talents were really outstanding. He was clearly an excellent tactician, able to make the most of each type of forces available to him (even if he could not make the most of their combination - an operational ability rather than a tactical one). While other British senior officers simply left tactics to their subordinates and the latter's

interpretations of the manuals, and while too many American generals virtually ignored the possible rewards of tactical ingenuity (though some were highly effective at the operational level), Montgomery worked hard to devise the right tactics for each encounter, and then made sure that they were promulgated to his forces. His other great talent, as a trainer of troops and finally armies, was obviously complementary: after developing the tactics, Montgomery would institute efficient schemes to train the forces to implement those tactics.

This of course was merely one aspect of Montgomery's all-round ability as a manager, which not even his harshest critics have tried to deny. There was no casual country-house informality in Montgomery's management: under him, tasks were rationally allocated, schedules were kept tight and much attention was paid to organizational questions. (It was not just personal ambition that motivated Montgomery's long and futile struggle to obtain the command of all land forces in the Western theatre after Normandy: the manager in him was violently offended by the essential unsoundness of a structure which had Eisenhower as the supreme in charge of all questions, with no officer below him in command of all the land forces.)

In the end, however, it was his leadership that made Montgomery. The funny hats and schoolboy jokes, the constant visits to the troops, the jeep-bonnet speeches and the cigarette hand-outs were only the highly visible tip of the iceberg. It was not mere techniques of showmanship that inspired so much loyalty (which still endures, as Nigel Hamilton shows) but rather the widespread and very accurate belief of soldiers and junior officers that Montgomery was most profoundly concerned with their welfare. The same over-cautious methods of war which his more dashing contemporaries and most military historians find so unimpressive, and which undoubtedly delayed the Allied victory, also provided the best assurance to his soldiers that their lives would not be needlessly risked. Montgomery was willing to waste time and ammunition, he was willing to delay, to let great bombardments scarcely needed (Reggio and Caen notably), but he was exceedingly careful with the lives of his own men. The same ruthlessness in firing unsatisfactory officers which made him so unpopular in the upper echelons of the British army was also a clear signal to the mass below that no solidarity of rank and no old-boy affiliations would keep them in the hands of incompetents.

There was in fact a sort of class bias in reverse in Montgomery's attitude. He liked and even respected the common man while being suspicious of the character and abilities of those who ranked above him. That, clearly, was the tacit message that Montgomery's showmanship carried to the troops: by wearing his funny chitchee he was dissociating himself from the conventional hierarchy in order to communicate with them more easily. They understood and reciprocated in full measure.

of them, these wars are, in fact, General Hackett's weakest point; he has very little idea what the true character, either of the American Civil War or the First World War, really was. Yet it is personal experience and feeling that fitfully illuminate his pages, nowhere better, I think, than in this passage:

Some men are dissatisfied if they become too separated from the earth upon which they live, and what happens on and round it. I realized myself as a young officer that I should not have been content doing anything for a living in which it was never important to me what time the sun rose, dawn, dusk, moonset, and moonrise, what the wind does, the shape and flow of woodland, marsh and hill, currents and eddies, the flow of rivers and the form of clouds, whether the sun is on the tree or the branches are bare, the seasons, the weather and the stars - these are important of compelling importance in the lives of all men, and, of course, some of them are more important to some than to others. So, too, at all times and above all

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# Revelations of excess

William Griffin

UNIQUE FANTHAM  
Seneca's Tragedies: A Literary Introduction  
with Text, Translation, and Commentary  
Ed. by William Griffin. Princeton University Press.  
1981. Pp. 352. \$25.00.

No classical author has enjoyed a greater improvement in reputation at the hands of recent scholars than Seneca. If a single reason had to be given, it would surely be that, in comparison with the last century and the opening years of this, we are less easily shackled by him. We are more familiar with his wit and his cynicism, more familiar with his hypocrisy and complacency, more familiar with his despotism; we are more accustomed to the violent and the gruesome in literature.

Yet matters are not so simple. If there has been some sympathetic interest in Seneca the philosopher and martyr of Nero, some attempt to counter earlier censures of the affected style and systematic thought of Seneca the philosopher, writers in English have worked hardest to rehabilitate Seneca the tragedian. For if we are not comfortable with rhetoric on the page, we accept it again in the theatre; and if we dislike explicit moralizing, we enjoy revelations of moral excess, especially when they are clothed in literary classics through allusion, parody and pastiche. Not that Seneca's tragedies are being studied in isolation from his other works. Indeed, so far from feeling the tragedy that led readers from late antiquity until the nineteenth century to deny that Seneca could be the author of both, modern scholars have shown that the plays exhibit the same philosophical maxims, architectural freedom and rhetorical style as the moral essays.

Chloe Fantham's excellent study of the tragedies introduces the reader to the best of modern work on Senecan tragedy, showing how the new approaches can be used to illuminate a particular play. Though a text and prose translation are provided, the text is, as the author says, derivative and conservative, and the translation is accurate and serviceable, but hardly inspired. (It is, however, a treat to be taken from the "theses" and "thous" of available English versions.) The heart of the book is the introduction and commentary, which are both learned and literary with perceptiveness and indeed provided with translations of only of the play but of some of the Latin and Greek passages cited in the discussion. Yet the detailed study, with its abundance also of annotated Greek and its technical discussion of metre and textual transmission, remains a work for scholarly readers familiar with the classical languages.

Commentary of this sort should be built to do and is not therefore the best vehicle for personal theories. This one monograph to the major problems, offering firm direction when the author feels strongly but somewhat expounding and criticizing different views.

The recent burning question of Senecan tragedy is: were the tragedies written for the stage or for recitation? Both practices are argued for the early Empire. Fantham starts with the arguments of Zwierlein, the most recent advocate of recitation in recent years. She showed how difficult it would be to stage Seneca's plays, stressing such features as the long movements of his characters, the changes of time and place, the uncertainty of the chorus and the tendency for the play to be vividly described at the same time and in the same place. She indicates the arguments often advanced: and points out that the difficulties that the plays pose for recitation, such as "unadorned" and "unadorned" speakers, and the lack of dialogue, are not insurmountable. She also points out that the most satisfactory medium for Seneca's tragedies is the stage.

Although Seneca would have recited his plays or passages from them alone or with others, he thought primarily in terms of publication for the stage. In the case of the tragedies, the question of whether Seneca would have recited his plays or passages from them alone or with others, he thought primarily in terms of publication for the stage. In the case of the tragedies, the question of whether Seneca would have recited his plays or passages from them alone or with others, he thought primarily in terms of publication for the stage.

or reading was the prime form of impact he envisaged, Seneca intended his violent and passionate language and his macabre physical descriptions to replace, not accompany, seeing the action on the stage.

Fantham follows recent criticism in crediting Seneca with considerable originality. After a thorough review of what is known about the Greek and Latin literary treatments of the final destruction of Troy, she concludes that he did not rely on any one literary model. Rather he drew on his knowledge of the tradition, adapting and attempting to surpass his greatest predecessors, the classical Greek tragedians, the Augustan dramatists and his beloved Virgil and Ovid. It takes as much faith to sustain this view as the reverse, given the loss of so much dramatic literature, but the hypothesis has merit: it encourages us to examine the plays as a whole, and discourages us from explaining every inconsistency in the action by assuming that the poet has contaminated separate sources.

Recent studies have rightly emphasized the novel structure Seneca has devised in order to accommodate in one play the twin themes he took from two Euripidean dramas: the killing of Polyxena from the *Hecluba*, and that of Astyanax from the *Trojan Women*. The mourning *Hecluba* dominates the beginning and end of the play. The decision about Polyxena precedes that about Astyanax but the decisions are carried out in the reverse order. This chiasmic symmetry involves delaying Polyxena's doom from Act 2, when Achilles' ghost demands her as his bride, until Act 4; Fantham points out that it creates problems that Seneca has not solved. Thus Andromache's knowledge of the ghostly demand comes and goes during Act 3 with the rhetoric of the moment. The use of Helen as the messenger who reveals the doom of Polyxena is noted as another of Seneca's most interesting inventions, but Fantham's view that she has been chosen merely as an untheatrical figure to the pure and chaste victim does not do full justice to Seneca's conception. As Andromache hints at 1.927, Helen is the female counterpart of Odysseus, who announces the decision about Astyanax: each disclaims personal responsibility for the act; each employs deceit, Odysseus in tricking Andromache into revealing her son's hiding-place, Helen in pretending at first that Polyxena is to have a living bridegroom. Thus there is no inconsistency of characterization, but rather the reverse, when Helen at once bemoans the loss of Paris and speaks of her years in Troy as captivity. Cronked arguments are just what we should expect from Helen, the master of wiles, who destroyed Paris through marriage just as Odysseus destroyed Troy through the festive wooden horse. Seneca appropriately makes her disown her guilt, both past and present.

Fantham's treatment of the theme of death in *Tragedies* and its relation to Seneca's views in his essays is highly illuminating, though she perhaps works too hard to rationalize the existence of the philosophical chorus (II. 371 ff), after rightly deeming it an "editorial intrusion" by the playwright. Fantham rightly notes Seneca's lack of interest in the question of burial, remarking, "instead of the Greek reverence for the dead he offers us admiration for the dying." Yet Seneca's Polyxena, for all her Stoic fearlessness in the face of death, is not free of the baser passions: the messenger speaks with approval of the silent anger and defiance of her end. As Fantham writes, "We cannot schematize Seneca's drama to match his objective philosophy, precisely because the imaginative artist in him admired and delighted in portraying passions contrary to his own moral theory."

Herein may lie the answer to a question the author poses but does not answer: given that Seneca was moved to write by a combination of aesthetic and philosophical motives, given that he felt a writer's urge to create characters, why did he choose drama? Was he just more captivated than his nephew Lucan who was to brave comparison with Virgil? Or did he wish to demonstrate his knowledge of human psychology in all its variety and excesses without comment or explanation? When moved to analyse, castigate and exhort, he wrote in the first person; judgment by implication he left to others.



Women at a Fountain House: black-figured Hydria of about 520-510 BC, reproduced from *Images of Women in Antiquity*, edited by Averil Cameron and Annette Kuhrt (1993pp, Croom Helm, £15.95, paperback, £8.95, 0 7099 0741 9).

# L'état, c'est moi

Robin Seager

ARTHUR KEAVENEY  
Sulla: The Last Republican  
243pp. Croom Helm. £16.95.  
0 7099 1507 1

Sulla has always been one of the most enigmatic and controversial of the great men of the Roman Republic. The ancient tradition was totally dominated by Sulla's own version of events, and for a long time the learned world was content to accept his valuation of himself and his enemies. After all, he believed in law and order, in government by the noble-undrich-therefore-good, and in keeping the lowly and poor-therefore-wicked in their place; so he must have been a Good Thing, even if there remained a nagging suspicion that he was also, when given his head, a Bad Man. But recently Sulla has been fiercely attacked and an attempt made to rehabilitate his opponents and victims. Perhaps inevitably this welcome new book tries to redress the balance in Sulla's favour, perhaps inevitably it sometimes goes too far. But it is concise and readable, while its arguments and conclusions are based on a formidable series of detailed studies, several still unpublished but generously made available to me by their author.

Arthur Keaveney's treatment of Sulla's early career and his chequered relationship with Marius is largely sound, with a proper insistence on the importance of his role in the negotiations which brought Jugurtha into Roman hands and the magnitude of his achievement in Cilicia. The only serious weakness is a certain inconsistency about the amount of support, if any, enjoyed by Marius in the senate, based on a confusion between the attitudes of the nobles and the rank-and-file members. The reconstruction of the complex events of the civil year 88 is also broadly plausible, and it is fair to stress that Sulla's and Marius' double-crossed Sulla. But Sulla's treacherous response to the second embassy from the senate puts him firmly on the same moral level as his opponents. Of course he claimed to be acting in the interests of the state, and may well have believed it, but so did they - so did all parties to any civil upheaval at Rome. Nor is it clear that the people was under any less pressure to pass Sulla's laws after his seizure of Rome than it had been to pass those of Sulla's little earlier. The account of developments in 87 and of politics during the Mithradatic war is perhaps too hard on Cinna and Carbo (though how can we ever know now?), surely too charitable to Sulla for his failure to deal with Mithradates once and for all.

There is, however, much that is admirable. The analysis of the identity and attitudes of Sulla's supporters is revealing: a mixture of career soldiers, refugees from Cinna, and later renegade Cinnatists, some moved only by self-interest, others by moral considerations and a desire to defend the authority of the senate. Once the crisis was over and normal govern-

ment restored, this heterogeneous group not surprisingly disintegrated as its members pursued their several goals: the "Sullan oligarchy" after Sulla's death is an invention of modern scholarship. Excellent too is the exposition of the importance of religion to Sulla and the role of individual deities in shaping his actions. Venus played a critical part in his defence of the legitimacy of his position in the East; so too did his coins, which are acutely interpreted here. Another topic that is well handled is that of Sulla's dealings with the Italians, both during the civil war and afterwards. Throughout Italy there was much division of opinion, not only between regions but also within individual communities, as events during the proscriptions were to show. Sulla's settlements were dictated at least in part by economic considerations and not all appear to have been punitive in character.

Like Livy and other ancients who largely swallowed Sulla's own story, Keaveney draws the line at the proscriptions. Sulla's identification of his personal interests with those of the state had always been extreme, but now it went beyond all reason. By no stretch of the imagination could his treatment of, eg, Censorinus, Pompeius or Caesar be justified on grounds of public interest, and indeed there is no mention of the state in Sulla's notorious epitaph. Though Sulla laid down his dictatorship when he thought he had finished his work, he never retired from public life, intending still to exercise his *auctoritas* when it was needed. His death did much to hasten the undermining of his constitution by depriving of effective leadership those who wanted, for whatever reason, to preserve it intact.

After reading this book I feel I understand Sulla better. I also find him interesting. The one by no means follows from the other, and Keaveney deserves praise on both counts.

# A Holy Tradition of Working

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ERIC GILL

This important publication will make it possible for the current reassessment of Gill's significance as an artist to be extended to his writings. The passages are arranged under 14 subjects, including: First Things; What is Art?; Beauty; Imagination; Aesthetic Pleasure; Slavery and Freedom; Work and Responsibility; Tools or Machines?; Man and Manufacture; Property, Ownership and Holy Poverty; etc, offering a concise yet comprehensive exposition of Gill's thinking on the nature and meaning of human creativity.

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# Unlimited liabilities

John Terraine

JOHN HACKETT  
The Profession of Arms  
320pp. Sidwick and Jackson. £12.95.  
0 2455 1110 1

The *Profession of Arms* is a more or less up-to-date and lavishly illustrated version of the best-known lectures which General Sir John Hackett delivered in 1962. The formula does not really work. The numerous illustrations (thirty-two pages in colour), excellent as almost all of them are, do not march happily alongside a condensed, allusive, generalized text appropriate to a lecture hall. It is a combination which prompts immediate comparison with, say, Montgomery's *A History of Warfare*, and the comparison is distinctly damaging. Even the *Myths*, an essay on leadership, only serves to remind us that Montgomery wrote a whole book under that title, equally idiosyncratic but containing far more material. The best parts of this book are those in which the author draws on his own army experience. This

may be said to have begun, he tells us, when, as an Oxford undergraduate in 1932, he announced that "since a second world war was inevitable he would take a regular commission because he found it harder to be killed as a professional than as an amateur, making for exemption from discipline, and the inevitably delicate matter of relations between soldiers and the fresh young officer, he says that the latter has to be made to remember that only a person of liberal mind is entitled to exercise coercion over others in a society of free men". There is the equally delicate (nowadays) duality of "officer and gentleman": here, according to Hackett, "the problem is to retain group coherences and a rational pattern of discipline and command without relying on moribund features in the social structure".

What is it, asks Hackett, that sets the profession of arms apart from all others? More than anything else, it is what I call the unlimited liability clause in a soldier's contract. When men are unprepared for this, and it is invoked, the results can be disturbing. The nature of his contract sets the man off on a path. The contract itself, he later remarks, is unlike other

the soldier offers not merely his work and his talent, but his life, and this is what distances him from civil values.

The essential basis of the military life is the ordered application of force under an unlimited liability: it is the unlimited liability which sets the man who serves his life apart. He will be (or should be) always a citizen. So long as he serves, he will never be a civilian.

All these are good points, and there are many more; but all suffer from being given too little space for exposition and illustration.

It is in the lengthy historical section that the book is weakest. Hackett makes no attempt to trace the origin of his profession: the first separation of men for the sole purpose of war from the total mankind which had to be ready at any time to conduct it. His starting-point is Sparta, a freak militarist society in an already sophisticated era. We thus miss the interesting inter-play of citizen-soldiers and professional soldiers which lasted many centuries in Europe, was only briefly displaced by all-professional armies, and returned with the mass armies used in the wars fought since the Industrial Revolution. Although he took part in one

of them, these wars are, in fact, General Hackett's weakest point; he has very little idea what the true character, either of the American Civil War or the First World War, really was.

Yet it is personal experience and feeling that fitfully illuminate his pages, nowhere better, I think, than in this passage:

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**PETER NEWMAN BROOKS (Editor)**  
**Seven-Headed Luther: Essays in**  
**Commemoration of a Quincentenary 1483-**  
**1983**  
325pp. Oxford University Press. £22.50.  
0198266480

The theme as such was not, at first glance, without promise. Luther's most vociferous and verbally ferocious opponent, Ioannis Cochlaeus, had his *Septiceps Lutherus* of 1529 illustrated with a cartoon of the seven-headed Bible-reading monk: the heads successively designated Doctor, Martinus, Lutherus, Ecclesiastes (Preacher), Suermus (Fanatic), Visitor and Borrains (Revolutionary). Cochlaeus' portrait could indeed have served to highlight those aspects of Luther's thought derided by his opponent as contradictory—one of the chief medieval marks of heresy. Special attention to Cochlaeus, however, inevitably distracts from an understanding of Luther. In his essay "Cochlaeus as Polemicist" Gotthelf Weidemann calls the *Septiceps Lutherus* "a masterpiece of distortion, misrepresentation, and also stupidity". Leaving aside the ques-

"Brian Gerrish treats the "Doctor", analysing Luther's own understanding of the doctor's office on the basis of pre-Second World War research (Stöcklein, Holl) and proceeding to some very worthwhile observations of his own on subjectivity in Protestant thought: "Luther started a Reformation and Schleiermacher a new period in the history of Protestant thought. To inquire about the relationship between them seems natural enough." Normen Nagel appends to the name "Martinus" a series of marginalia on the history of Christology from St Peter at Pentecost via Ignatius, Athanasius and Augustine, up to Occam and the Occamists – with the usual misunderstanding of the crucial function of the *potestas absoluta* and confusion of Occam with nominalism. The close of Nagel's essay we are relieved to hear that when Luther was asked on his death bed "whether he died trusting only in Christ" at least "his last word was firm yes." Martin Loeckhorst has chosen to employ his heading "Indignus" to examine Luther's relation to the Pope. This ambitious task is hardly facilitated by Loeckhorst's sticking at what he entitles the doctrine of the two kingdoms and the doctrine of the two kingdoms as abbreviations. That a Christian can [!] at one and the same time be both righteous and a sinner, so to belong to both the sacred and secular realm in defence of this Danish author. It is to note, however, that the English translation times obliged the reader to venture deeper guesses at his original intention.

"Ecclesiastes" on Luther as a churchman more convincingly developed by Rottschäfer and Lewis Spitz in two essays which offer parallel interpretations. Fischer answers Gerni's question about subjectivity through a presentation of Luther's doctrine of Church; and Spitz advances the thesis that he did as professor and reformer he did as secretary of the Church.<sup>1</sup> The unexpected conclusion that Gerni and Spitz

The strongest part of this collection is dedicated to Luther as "Visitor", but this is not because of the editor's own contribution under the heading. Brooks's florid style obscures assorted flawed assertions, one example of which should suffice for illustration: "Lutheran priorities expounded Gospel doctrine in terms of faith made available (!) as a result (!) of

## Counter-Reformation rabbis

**BYRON L. SHERWIN**  
**Mystical Theology and Social Dissent: The Life**  
**and Works of Judah Loew of Prague**  
 253pp. Associated University Presses, £12.50,  
 08386 30286

The Spanish Jewish exiles pondered deeply over the fate which befell them, as they became up to the largest Jewish community in all Christian countries, and the second oldest in Europe. Many turned to mysticism and intensified the search for messianic moments, seeing the fall of Constantinople in 1453 the beginning of the disintegration of Christendom. It is not surprising that it was a Spanish Kabbalist, Abraham Ha'levy (the brother-in-law of Abraham Saeuto, the astronomer who provided the navigational tables for Columbus's first voyage), who paid great attention to Luther soon as the news of his split from Rome reached the Ottoman Empire, and saw in him a divine herald who would destroy the Christian Church from within, and thereby fulfil the prophecy in Daniel about the fall of the fourth kingdom, which Jews regarded as symbolizing the Catholic Church and Christian states. As a result of the Spanish expulsions there arose a Safed the greatest spiritual centre of Jews with Kabbalah as its focus, which was to influence world Jewry for a hundred and fifty years. This influence was particularly felt in Poland, Bohemia and Moravia.

The new spiritual Europe keenly followed the course of the Reformation and was horrified by the violent hatred shown towards it by Luther. After he failed in his efforts to convert them to his brand of Christianity, Luther reviled the nastiest accusations against the Jews—the blood libel, desecrating the host, that Jews sucked the teats of cows, etc.—and portrayed them as the greatest exploiters of poor Christians.

In Bohemia and Moravia the appearance of John Hus aroused wide sympathy among Jews. A rabbi wrote in 1470: "A development of the highest consequence, brought about by Rabbi Avigdor Kara, lived in Prague, the capital of Bohemia. The King [of France, Charles VII] took a liking to him and grew into a feeling of intense love, until he learned from him to acknowledge the redemption of the Jewish faith. Shortly afterwards he passed away. As leader he [the King] had appointed a magnificent *High Priest* [the Pope] from among the Hebrews, a son of our race, a man of our

The second section of this collection, not

This Polish-born prolific author, known to Jews under his Hebrew appellation, Maharash of Prague, was one of the most remarkable rabbis of the second half of the sixteenth century. There is a multitude of legends about him, one of the most popular of which was of the creation of a Golem, a man-robot who protected the Jews in a time of intense persecution. The late Gershom Scholem proved that many of these legends began about the revival of the blood libel in Russia, and stem mostly from the nineteenth century. Judah Loew is the only rabbi to whom a monument has been erected in a European city, and his tomb is venerated by Jews and Gentiles alike. He pondered deeply on the state of the Jews in the cosmic creation, on the Torah and its intermediary position between the divinity and the Jewish people, and especially, like the Spanish exiles in the Ottoman Empire, on the need for the Jews to be released from the Diaspora, which is a state of slavery for them, and on their inevitable return to the land of Zion in the messianic times - though he himself advised against attempts to speed the coming of the redeemer.

In the last fifty years, Loew's voluminous writings have attracted the attention of many scholars in Israel, France and America who have looked for the ideas which place him in a historical framework, particularly within the context of the Counter-Reformation. He was often anti-rationalist, but at the same time not unaware of the new scientific ideas of the sixteenth century. He criticized sharply the rational, historic and pioneering investigations of Azariah de Rosal into the legends in the Talmud, as well as into the history of the Jews during the Second Temple. Azariah's book *Me'or Eynaim*; in Loew's opinion, would open the floodgates to doubt of tradition, and to scepticism, and thereby invalidate accents

Byron L. Sherwin has written the first book on Leo in English, and it is very useful. He attempts to portray him as a mystic—a Kabbalist, deeply influenced by the *Zohar*, the classic Kabbalistic text compiled by Moses de León in Spain at the end of the thirteenth century. Undoubtedly Leo had strong mystical leanings, but he does not belong to the stream only. He combines heterogeneous, and sometimes contradictory, systems. No consistent

The volume is beautifully designed and produced by Oxford University Press. And yet notwithstanding the indicated exceptions *Seven-Headed Luther* is disappointing. It is to be regretted that the editor of an English quinquicentennial tribute to Martin Luther has not provided his readers with a more coherent and cogent and memorable work.

ings such as we find in his older contemporary Moscos Cordero. His philosophy at history is deeply influenced by Yehuda Ha'Levi and is not mystical at all. One of the weaknesses of Sherwin's book, which is otherwise excellent, is that he does not relate Loew to other thinkers of his time, particularly Spanish esotericists like Cordero, Joseph Yavetz, Solomon Alkalai, and Joseph Taitzack, or the Italian rabbi Ishmael Moscato. It would be intriguing to know whether Loew was aware of the radical, Kabbalistic teachings of Isaac Luria, who died in Safed in 1572, and whose influence reached central Europe at the end of the century. No does Sherwin examine fully the reasons for Loew's attack on Azartali de Rossi. It is pity that Sherwin seems to be unfamiliar with the studies of Frances Yates, who investigated the Christian thinkers of the "Hermetic" tradition from whom he could learn much about the ideas which were common, or parallel, among Jews and Christians of the time.

Similarly, the author states categorically that Loew exercised central influence on the Hasidim in the eighteenth century, and that the basic concept of the Zaddik - the charismatic saint as the intermediary between God and man - is derived from his writings. I am dubious of any claims of Judah Loew in the early writings of the Hasidim (except for the minor quotation in Jacob Joseph Cohen Pulnynoye), or in the works of Bar Meir Meiritch. This thesis is a very interesting one, but could only be tested after a thorough examination and documentation of early Hasidic writings.

Loew belongs essentially to the modern world, and yet he appears almost modern in the way he described the Diaspora - Galut - an unnatural state of affairs:

According to the order of existence, it is not better that one nation should be subjugated by another; The dispersion is *not* natural . . . God has created each nation for itself . . . The Jews do not desire according to the order of reality, to be under the rule of others.

We have bare pre-echoes of Herder.

Loew expressed himself sharply against the casuistic method of studying the Talmud, demanded a return to the plain analysis of text. In this he was far ahead of his time. His final attack on that method came from the Gaon of Wilno at the end of the eighteenth century. Whether Loew was a racial disbeliever as Sherwin claims, or simply a critic of Jewish establishment, as the late, brilliant Israeli historian H. H. Ben-Sasson judged, is a personal judgment.

Half mystic and half rationalist, as Loew was, it is no accident that his disciple, David Ganz, was the first Jew to hook in Hebrew on Copernicus (1622) that he became an intimate friend of Brahe and Johannes Kepler. Mysticism

WRITERS AND THE CINEMA-A SYMPOSIUM

It grows more and more obvious that film has been the great generic brentkthrough of the twentieth century, producing a solvency of forms comparable in artistic impact to the emergence of the novel in Britain in the eighteenth century. The novel, like film, emerged as a "low" form, and its very codes and systems were thought vulgar. Yet increasingly they penetrated into literary activity, shaping all the forms of writing. Much the same has been true of the impact of film on twentieth-century fiction; many of the devices and coding systems that we identify as radical or experimental in the modern novel therefore have an implicit filmic source. I am not here talking about the fact that many contemporary novels are eventually adapted into film or to its close proximation, television drama, nor even about the fact that many contemporary novelists carry among their repertoire of skills the professional competence to write for film or television. Such interlinking and connection have accelerated a process that has already long existed, and been repeatedly acknowledged as an aspect of creative practice: Waugh's startling scenic economy, Doa Passos's "camera eye", Wyndham Lewis's method of "the great without", all owe a good deal to an increasing recognition of the importance of those organizational and notational devices - "flashback", "cutting", "point of view", "angle of vision" - that are fundamental to film.

In recent years in Britain we have seen a substantial change in the manner and the structure of the novel, and the scale of change that has occurred between the 1950s and the present time has yet fully to be apprehended and analysed by the professional critics. In my view, one important development has been the evolution of a technical professionalism in fiction that is not best to be analysed in terms of well-delimited literary-aesthetic theories, but in terms of a transformed vocabulary of writing detached from filmic practice. The *nouveau roman* has in fact generated much literary theory, a good deal of it originating, at first at least, from the practitioners: Robbe-Grillet, Butor, Sarramite themselves. Yet the intimacy between their radical grammar and film theory and practice has been vividly illustrated not only by their strong emphasis on perception as the source of text, but on the readiness of some at least of these authors to move into film. *Last Year in Marienbad* is, among other things, an act of intimacy performed between contemporary fiction and cinema; and the growth of the *ciné-novel* in France was a logical outcome of the process.

In Britain, the Intimacies have been another kind. For most writers of fiction, the step into film is far less accessible than that into television drama — a television drama that, until recently at least, has been among the best and professionally most advanced in the world. In my own case, I have found writing for television, and so learning its systems and technicalities, one of the largest influences on my practice as a novelist. If the writing of fiction is a complex technical inquiry into the strategic relations of language — of subject, object, relations, angles of vision, the formation and decomposition of predictable codes — then the development of that Inquiry has been much advanced, for me and I suspect for many other writers, by the elaborate lore now commonplace in films.

it is for this reason that the signs of decline in television drama, and the slow fading of some of the hopes raised by Channel 4, concern me as a novelist. For twenty fortunate years we have seen film developing not simply as a popular form of entertainment but as a medium of

technical innovation, reinforced, certainly, by technical change within the industry, but also by a consciously innovative attitude among practitioners themselves. Declining budgets for television drama, and the move of many of the strongest talents to independent production, have changed this map; and the future looks increasingly complicated, as a new technical era involving changed forms of transmission evolves. Whether the kind of creative intimacy that has, I believe, helped to give us a new form of and a new initiative in the serious novel will continue, much concerns me. I would also want, in a debate that tends towards a simplification of this intimacy, concentrating as it usually does on problems of adoption or even on generic incompatibility, to stress the complexity of that intimacy, and its importance.

I suppose my experience with films has been different from that of most other writers because I've always worked with the same team, the director James Ivory and the producer Ismail Merchant. This has protected me in so far as they have stood between me and what I would have found terribly unpleasant: a collaborative effort at what is called the script level; the dreaded story conference. The only sort of story conference we ever seem to have is when Jim says "Oh that's terrible, awful, can't you do better than that", thereby usually echoing my own thoughts.

But besides protecting me from the real world of films, they have also brought it close, in the sense of home, to me. I know what they go through every time they have to raise money for a film—that is, I know about the financiers who draw up solemn contracts and then disappear when cast and crew are already on location and the producer is desperate for money. Once Ismail found a shipping magnate who wanted to be involved in films but one of whose ships sank every time Ismail needed money; another time a rich widow (actually, this happened several times with several rich widows) was already planning her outfit for the première and the village she was going to rent for the festival at Cannes when her accountant advised her against the investment. Then there are the actor's agents who always seem to be more important (or do I mean self-important?) than their clients; and everybody's lawyers whose fees take such a major bite out of film's budget; and the actors—ators—surely the most comprehensive amalgam of human qualities any writer could hope to meet. All these people have enlarged my world and my landscape; and so have the locations we have used, admitting me into houses, palaces, whole strange cities—what an opportunity for a shy writer who would otherwise be restricted to peering through people's windows at night when the lights are on.

Another kind of advantage that I have gained through films has been in the editing room, where I have learned a whole new method of narration by watching scenes being moved to and fro in various juxtapositions, and time-schemes manipulated through flashbacks and flash-forwards. It has been a two-way traffic for me - what I have learned in films I have put back into my books, and what I have learned about characterization, relationships, happenings, and everything else that goes into writing fiction I've put to use in writing films. I can't think what it would have been like for me to have had one and not the other. I've needed both to keep going - I mean imaginatively as well as financially.

Even though the cinema has lived off their work, particularly off their novels, there has not been much place in the making of films for serious writers. On the whole they write screenplay because they get asked and because the money is good—sufficient at least to finance the writing of the next book. Cinema has been unable to take its writers seriously, and the writers have returned the compliment. I have heard of people who are determined to succeed as screenplay writers, but I would assume this to be more of a social and financial ambition than an artistic one. For the film belongs to its director, he is its *auteur*, and "his" screenplay writer, much like his designer and cinematographer, works to the requirements of his authorship. Even when the writer provides an original screenplay, and with it the characters, the story, the moral language of the film, these will all ultimately be claimed by, or attributed to, the director, subsumed to his *œuvre* or transformed to fit in with it. On the whole, the individual visions and ideas of writers have not found their way on to the screens, and this explains in part the vaporous quality, the lack of content of a vast majority of films. The empty nature of much cinema is even celebrated; partly to justify the absence of writers from the centre of the film-making process, there are many who insist that cinema is not a medium of ideas, it is a medium of emotion. On hearing this the writer is likely to curl his lip and return with relief to the autonomy and privacy of novel writing.

Most directors will concede that film making is a co-operative process, that dozens of people are involved, and that the notion of a single author is little more than a convenient fiction. The most important contributors are the director, the writer, the cinematographer, the actors, the designer or art director and the editor. Of these I would consider the first three as central to the creative process, the authority of the actors being somewhat undermined by the piecemeal nature of film-making. It seems quite possible to imagine a film culture in which the director is not the key figure in the triumvirate. Writer and cameraman could combine into a powerful collaboration, for example, leaving the director with the essential duties of *mao-management*. Or writer and director could work together to attempt to satisfy the image-making imperatives of the cinematographer. Or again, director and cameraman might work to realize as best they could the ideas of the writer. None of these is necessarily more desirable than any other. For all these, and many other working combinations to flourish would be infinitely preferable to the present grip directors have, or are considered to have, on film-making. In fact, many films, especially low-budget, independent productions, are shaped by creative

*Little the Aunt loved and Graham Fuller  
Consultant Father Arnold Fuller*

collaborations far messier and far more interesting than that proposed by the model of director-as-lone-helmsman.

I have made two films with the director. Richard Eyre. Both were the occasions of intense and, from our point of view, successful collaboration. One was *The Imitation Game* by Ian McEwan, the other was *The Ploughman's Lunch* by Richard Eyre, the first for television, the second, at least initially, for cinema distribution. Both, of course, were attributed wrongly for these were joint efforts. For whatever reasons, television is considered a writer's medium, and until recently most British film-making, because of a lack of adequate financing, has had to be for the small screen. If there really is to be a renaissance of British cinema at last, most of its creative figures will have cut their teeth on TV films, and the writer may well find his or her position in cinema much strengthened. Over the last year it has been noticeable how film critics in "serious" papers are more willing to consider a script, as well as performances or direction, as an essential component of a good film.

British cinema has been criticized frequently for being too literary and theoretical and insufficiently "filmic". Clearly, to present a film in the manner of a filmed play is simply bad film-making. However, if we are to have a strong, independent cinema which is not looking over its shoulder at French critics and theorists who wish to elevate old Jerry Lewis movies to the status of high art, or at American producers with their ingrained contempt for their audiences, then it would be as well for British cinema to develop its own distinctive qualities, drawing where necessary on our strong literary and theatrical traditions, and transforming them in the process to meet the requirements of film making. If a "literary" cinema is one which takes its writers seriously and tempts them to spend more than a cursory six or eight weeks on a script and encourages them to expend the same kind of effort that might give to a short novel, and if well-shaped, coherent and surprising scripts were the consequence, and if directors were sufficiently respectful towards writers to make no changes to these scripts without their agreement, then I am for such a cinema.

Almost everyone knows the horrible job about the Pollish (Irish, Canadian etc) actors who wanted to make it in the movies. She slop with the writer. Poor girl, she should be forgiven for thinking that the guy who makes the whole thing up and writes it down is important. Years later, when she finally makes it, she might look up from her lot of coke and wonder what could be done to improve his lot. I would suggest the following: if the writer is to remain involved with the film after completing the script, he should insist on being paid for pre-production work with the director, for sitting in on casting sessions and so on. If he

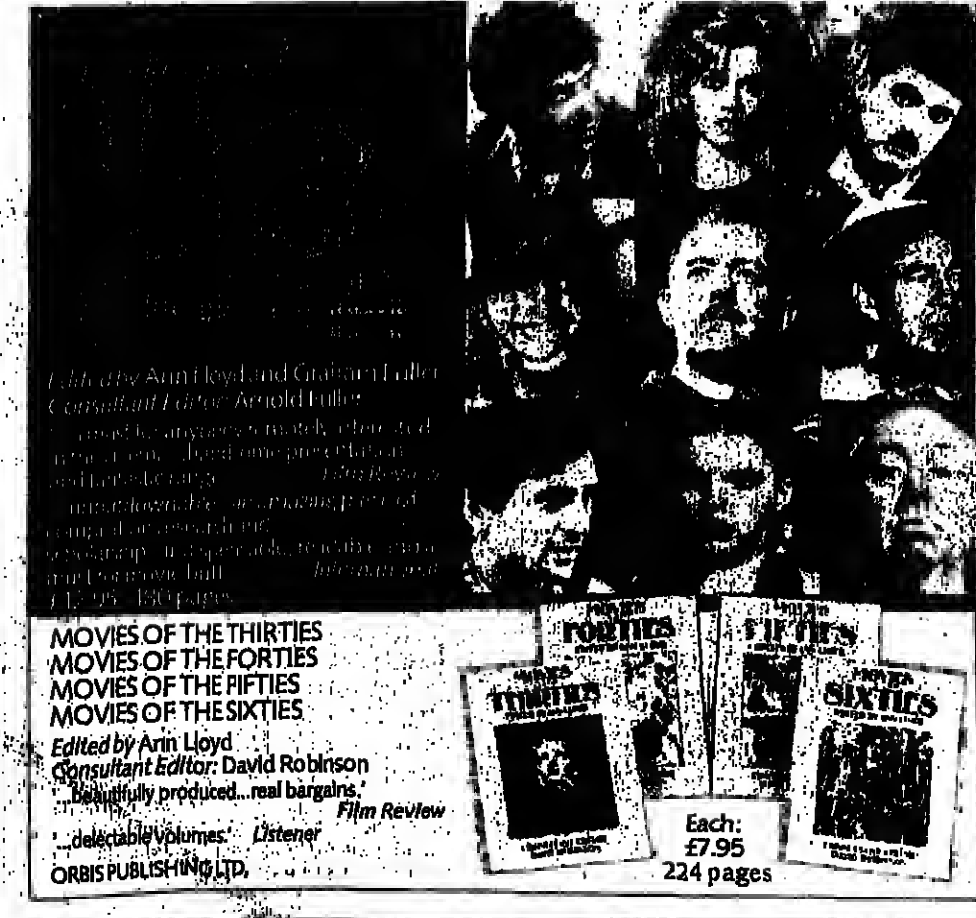
**Women  
and  
Film**  
Both sides of  
the camera  
EANN KAPLAN  
Illustration by  
GARY BASEMAN

Through a critique of Hollywood's 'classical period' (1930-60), and a contemporary Hollywood film, *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*, followed by an analysis of the work that women film-makers have recently produced in response to Hollywood's patriarchal images, Ann Kaplan surveys the distance feminist film theory has travelled since 1970.

Paperback 0 416 31750 2 £6.95 288 pages

**METHUEN**

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## Nicholas Mosley

The new edition of Lenny Lipton's idiosyncratic and informative *Independent Filmmaking* (435pp, Orbis, Paperback, £10.95/\$16.95, 1975-9), is a completely revised and updated version of the original, which first appeared in 1972. Intended as a guide to the technical aspects of film-making, the book, which now includes a section on video for the film-maker, has detailed chapters on, for example, the camera, the shooting, splicing and editing, sound, magnetic recording, the sound track and laboratory's role. There is also a chapter on general information on budgeting, distribution, income tax, script-writing, profe-

The seventh edition of *Halliwel's Rubric Companion*, edited by Leslie Halliwell, recently appeared in paperback (895pp, Canada, £5.95, 0 586 08399 5). It now has a thousand new entries and many old items have been revised.

the ghosts that had been exorcised in writing the novel had come back to life.

I am at present at work on a script of my most recent novel, *The Villa Gollwyn*, and am conscious of having learned two lessons from the adoption of *A Married Man*. The first

S. Schoenbaum

So it isn't surprising that Towne should be almost unregarded, although one of our most talented screenwriters, in different genres. Towne turned out a novelistic complexity and richness—greater lucidity than *The Big Sleep*—in Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974), with its Land imagery (a parched Los Angeles) and its sinister hanky-panky going down the water reserves. The next year,

WRITERS AND THE CINEMA-A SYMPOSIUM

We owe some of our best screenplays to the directors. John Huston began his film career as a script writer for Warner Brothers, so it isn't surprising that for his first film he fashioned his own screenplay of Dashiell Hammett's *Mulholland Falcón*. The film is one of the select few — *Chinatown* and *Casablanca* belong in this category — that I make a point of seeing whenever I get a chance. We remember by name Joel Cairo, played by Peter Lorre, a famous actor in his own right, and Cosmo Craven, the fat man, played by Sidney Greenstreet. Audiences are more likely (I suspect) to know Wilmer the gunsel than Eliza Cook, Jr., the fine actor who portrays him. It is unusual for the subsidiary parts in a film to remain so fresh in memory. From as early on as *The Killing* (1956), his first commercial feature film, Stanley Kubrick has done his own screenplays or collaborated on them; always, that is, except for *Spartacus*, the direction of which he inherited, and *Lolita*, which Nabokov himself did. For *The Shining* — based on Stephen King's ham-fisted best seller

## The cause of criticism

Dilys Powell

...of the figures on the screen—he was elegant, a draftsman rather than Michael in today's *Punch*, but in his day clearly cherished. The names are angled out so necessarily as serious critics (like Carroll) might see the joke, but as writers who valued opinions—something to be valued in the early post-war days: a period when there was a general conviction that anybody could write about the animal world.

It ain't necessarily so; Louis Malle's *M. de M.* *Dinner with André* is all language, yet it is still film - and congenial. As regards Shakespeare would anyone really wish to be without Kozintsev's *Lear*, or his *Hamlet*? Or Olivier's *Henry V*, despite the fact that he had to abandon half of Shakespeare's text? Or Orson Welles's *Poofstuf* (*Chimes at Midnight*), with Margaret Rutherford unforgettable as Mistress Quickly, just about the best medieval battle I've ever seen on film (Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* excepted, but that was in another country), and numerous other felicitous?

had to do was tell the story. Only occasionally did some true writer from outside the lists of the journalists take a hand. With delight one recalls that Graham Greene, film writer as well as novelist, was once a film critic.

By the late 1930s and the war years, the film critics were a recognizable species: recognized but not always revered. Drama critics' course remained respected, even if some member of their profession, James Agate for instance, turned his attention to the screen and wrote about films. And film critics, though they might be accepted, had to be curbed. Before the war one would sometimes hear reports of embargoes, of doors closed on critics, especially by the powerful American distributors. In 1941 I wrote in unfriendly terms of a film much valued by its makers and indeed by a great number of other people: *Gone with the Wind*. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's London representative wrote to me to protest that his letter had an or-else tone. I saw no reason then, and see no reason now, to change my mind. The Critics' Circle is not a trade union; obviously nobody was going to strike for tireless, opinionated member – a newcomer too. Anyway, striking is useless in a profession where it is thought that anybody can do the job. But *The Sunday Times* backed its critics. For nearly a year – in fact until my predecessor at *The Sunday Times* (it was Sydney Carroll) then translated to higher position) persuaded the company to relent, no review of MGM productions appeared in the paper. Nobody apologized.

In the mid-1940s there was a far more resounding altercation; this time the BBC was involved in the screen-war. It had regular film critics, who, at the time, spoke for ten minutes before the lunch-time news on Sundays. Agatha Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer took umbrage at their attack; the offending critic was E. Arnold Robinson. MGM wrote to the BBC in terms which indeed led to there being an action for libel. She won; but MGM appealed to the House of Lords, and this time they sided; she lost. The affair was news; critics gave evidence for her, and the Academy Cinema held in her benefit a performance of a film with an MGMian. And although E. Arnold Robinson was defeated her action did serve to the cause of film criticism. Anyway, no further threat from the United States or anywhere else is to be feared.

Still, the position of the British film critic in its problems, or any rate until the second half of the 1940s. The distinction between review and critic has often been stressed; the dependence of the former on the latter has been overlooked. A British reviewer beginning

New York high-school English teacher, accompanied by his large ginger cat Tonto (Mazursky's equivalent of the Fool) visiting each of Harry's three children in turn. Is it really Lear? Read Mazursky and Josh Greenfield's novelization of the film, and you'll see that it is. "King Lear!" Harry exclaims at one point. "He gave up his real estate, too. And what did they do to him? They foreclosed. That's life." A really splendid film is the great Kurosawa's version of *Macbeth*, *Kumonosu-Djo*, released as *Throne of Blood*, with its Forest Spirit spinning her thread in her hut, the moving wood, and the hero-villain dying in a hail of arrows. A quartet of writers, including the director, fashioned the screenplay. That's Japan, that's Hollywood. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. This time it does.

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**Leonardo Sciascia**

As a boy I loved the cinema. Between 1930 and 1940 I saw at least one film a day, sometimes two even. I think my early affection for the cinema shows in my books, in my way of telling stories. Latterly, I have grown less and less fond of it; over the past five or six years I don't think I have seen more than ten films. I have always loved what one might call "invented creative cinema that is not based on books. A

Mozart is not a musician but music itself so René Clair is not a film director but film personified. As far as films that are made from books are concerned, I have come to hold the view that it is possible to make a good film from a mediocre book, even from a terrible book, but that a great book can only become a mediocre, if not terrible, film. Although I hold this view, I exempt from it films made from my own books: it would be masochistic to say that I find them good; and presumptuous (as well as running the risk of being unjust) to say that they are bad.

When giving up one of my own books to the cinema (five have been filmed so far) I have never worried about how unfaithful the film version may be to the original. The book is one thing; the film, one hopes, another. And I say "one hopes" because only by being unfaithful to the text, by betraying it and turning it into something else, can a good director make a good film. This is why – out of respect for directors and for films – I have never had anything to do myself with the filming. I have only worked once in the cinema: with the director Florestano Vancini on the film *Bronze, storia di un massacro*. This was based on archival research rather than on a book (even if Giovanni Verga did write a story on the affair in question). It is a good film, but few people have seen it: it was thought to portray Garibaldi in a bad light. And it is proverbial in Italy that one must never speak ill of Garibaldi.

followed the news. There was cinema not simply from France, which we thought we knew, and the Scandinavian countries, which the new imports showed we certainly did not know; not only from Italy, which now presented a face sometimes darker, sometimes more mysterious than had been suspected: there were films from Hungary and Poland and Greece; Argentina sent its surprises, Japan opened a new world to us. There was a reciprocal movement: directors and stars from unfamiliar countries visited Britain; right-wing London newspapers sent their reviewers to the Moscow film festival. The British newspaper writer became a citizen of world-cinema. America was within reach; one looked back almost with disbelief to a day when it was miraculous to lay hands on a copy of Lev. Jacobs's *The Rise of the American Film*. The wealth of critical writing was available. One still clung to the handful of books on American, French, German, which had sustained one through the lean years. But now the shelves were crammed; new acquisitions looked to far horizons. We were no longer outsiders. With delighted astonishment we saw the film reviewer of *The Times* — and he is, critic of notable erudition — playing a part in Hungarian film.

Listening to strange tongues, reading translations of dialogue, the critic was at once excited and sated. Time perhaps, for a correction; and the universities, which have so fondly fostered the cinema, stepped in again. A group of enthusiasts at Oxford produced a slightly ferocious magazine, *Sequence*; it reminded of the endless vitality of the American cinema. The group included two names which would be familiar later on to everyone in this country interested in the cinema: Lindsay Anderson, audacious film-director and theatre-producer, and Penelope Houston, editor of the British Film Institute's *Sight and Sound*. The magazine did more than reiterate in its reviewing the virtues of the American cinema; it pointed out that cinema should not be treated as a branch of the stage or an offshoot of the novel; it should be judged by its own standards. Obvious enough; some of us even tried for a week or two to follow the advice. But the indolent habits returned; perhaps we still do not know enough about the movies. Nevertheless in the last few years the film criticism of this country has made vast strides; we have benefited from the riches of material released since the end of the war, benefited by the new opportunities for travel, learnt more about technique and the creative processes of making a film.

فَكَفَّاهُ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ







## Heard at the Palace

John Grigg

**THEO ARONSON**  
**Royal Family: Years of Tradition**  
 271pp. John Murray. £12.50.  
 0719540844

**DOUGLAS KEAY**  
**Royal Pursuit: The Palace, the Press and the People**  
 253pp. Severn House. £8.95.  
 0227830155

The blurb describes Theo Aronson's *Royal Family: Years of Transition* as "a royal huckster with a difference." It is hard to see why. The author gives an account of the British royal family from the death of Queen Victoria to the present day, showing how it has "adapted to changing times". Most of this "study" or " saga" consists of all-too-familiar material culled from other books, but Aronson claims to have had "an exceptional degree of cooperation from the Palace", and he has, indeed, been talked to by the Queen Mother, Princess Margaret, the Prince of Wales and the late Princess Alice, as well as by miscellaneous unnamed courtiers. Thus he has been able to sprinkle his largely second-hand and, in interpretation, wholly unoriginal narrative with a few direct quotes of breathtaking banality.

# Naturally regal

## Peregrine Worsthorne

**ELIZABETH LONGFORD**  
**Elizabeth R: A Biography**  
389pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £10.95.  
0707782851

Only when a monarch is dead can a biographer hope to bring him or her properly to life. While still on the throne, a monarch is inevitably surrounded by such a smoke-screen of sympathy that not even the most penetrating eye can perceive the truth. Not until years later, when the archives are opened at least in part or, if so, it is possible to paint something approaching a genuine portrait. Nobody should know this better than Elizabeth Longford, rightly acclaimed for having written a fine biography of Queen Victoria, based on her diaries, letters, and a mass of other revealing personal and public documentation. She succeeded in bringing that Queen to life; but she too totally failed to do the same for Queen Elizabeth II, a biography which has had, in performance, to rely entirely on oral evidence; on interviews with past and present courtiers who are under a vow of secrecy; with chivalrous past and present Prime Ministers; with other members of the Royal Family, whose witness can hardly be said to be objective; and such members of the public who have had occasion to meet Her Majesty, all of whom, inevitably, have tales to tell of her regality, courage and devotion to duty.

This is as it should be. Monarchs or symbolic institutions, the validity and usefulness of which depend on the willing suspension of disbelief on the part of their subjects.

For a disinterested biographer to undertake a biography of the Queen is quite wrong. Inevitably, many people will buy the book in the expectation of its being a work of scholarship, when this is not. It is a work of hagiography and the only new light it sheds is on the judgment of the author rather than on the character of the subject. But perhaps this is being too hard on Lady Longford. She may see it as her duty to lay her reputation as a writer on the line in the service of her Queen. How else can one write passages like the following?

who sees the Queen for the first time, at the very end of her life, has the same immediate impression that cannot be real. The complexion to which life porcelain held up to the light. Elizabeth has kept intact all the charms of her naturalness. Since nature has been so kind to her, there would be no sense to doing otherwise. Nevertheless, to see her eyebrows in the light of the past, to explain something of importance, she has gathered. She knows who she is and she knows how to do it. There is no search for a formula, no experiment with a planting of the points to the beginning of a new line. The natural lines round the brilliant black

One remark by the Queen Mother could, however, have attracted some critical comment, if Aronson had really been writing with a difference. "We never consciously set out to change things; we never said 'Let's change this or introduce that'. Things just evolved." After 1945 royal routines reverted very much to the pre-war pattern, and there were no significant changes until the present Queen had been on the Throne for about five years, when things evolved just a little because certain decisions were taken. In expressing her own very strong conservatism the Queen Mother implies that change, when necessary, occurs of its own accord. But surely it does not.

And so it goes on, page after page of anodyne waffle, as if in her laudable determination to avoid embarrassing the Queen, Lady Longford forgot altogether that it is possible for an author to write so badly as to embarrass herself.

I have met the Queen three or four times and if Lady Longford had asked me for my impressions I would have had to confess that the experience was intensely embarrassing, to such lengths of self-immolation does a modern monarch have to go. She smiles, talks, cracks a joke or two, shakes hands, and one marvels at the naturalness, but rather in the way that one marvels of a robot which has been programmed to go through the motions of being endearingly human. Loyalty requires us to refer to the "mug" of monarchy, and to attribute our sense of awe in the royal presence to ancestral dotings back to the era of divine right. Up to a point this is true. But there is also something eerie nowadays about the relationship between the Queen and her subjects, and I am not at all sure that the bonds are any longer those of love and veneration. For what we now demand of the Queen is not so much to be a glorious personage in her own right as to represent the idealized notional character. Thus when the nation pretends to be loving her it is really only loving itself.

Republics get rid of their monarchs. But we have processed them so as to maintain the ceremonial appearance while fundamentally altering the essence. Today it is the Royals who have to please the people instead of the people pleasing the Royals. If the British monarchy chose to have a mind of its own it would not last for long. The condition of its survival is subservience to the popular will, rather as to the past the condition of a subject's survival was subservience to the Royal will.

Unfortunately, the affection which power feels for impotence dignifies neither giver nor receiver. To a disturbing extent the Royal Family is cherished by the people as they might cherish some once wild and cobra beast which is now safely behind bars; the democracy cheers the Royals as they jump through the hoops, so to speak. Of course there are many healthier aspects of the contemporary cult of monarchy which are so familiar as to need no rehearsing. But there is also this unhealthy aspect, which has more to do with humiliating than with venerating the symbol of authority.

Enough. The contemporary monarchy is not a subject about which it is desirable to be wholly frank. Both sides to the bargain, sovereign as well as people, prefer to take refuge behind a smoke-screen, to which Lady Longford has now added one more small canister of what-smelling incense.

The only pretentious feature of Douglas Keay's *Royal Pursuit: The Palace, the Press and the People* is its subtitle. The book is not, as readers might suppose, a comprehensive study of press and public attitudes towards the British monarchy, or of royal attitudes towards press and public. It is a chatty, readable account of the business of "royal-watching", mainly as practised by the popular press, and giving the inside story of some notorious incidents. Anyone who wants to know exactly how the *Sun* and the *Star* got their pictures of the Princess of Wales wearing a bikini on a beach in the Bahamas while she was expecting Prince William, or how the Queen's maid came to be quoted as exclaiming "Bloody hell, ma'am, what's he doing in here?" when she saw Michael Fagan sitting on the Queen's bed, or how a *Daily Express* photographer happened to find Prince Andrew travelling incognito to the West Indies with Koo Stark, has only to read this book.

Along with much that is trivial, though enjoyable, the book also contains some quite interesting information, and Keay's *obiter dicta* are on the whole sensible. But one of them is rather surprising. After saying that Fleet Street safeguards the image of the Monarchy, he goes on to say:

Certainly, if Fleet Street, or the media in general, were ever to see reason for making a deliberate and concerted effort to denigrate the Royal Family at every opportunity – with or without truth – then it could quite conceivably create a crisis in which the very existence of the Monarchy was threatened.

**In other words, the Monarchy exists by grace and favour of the media. Can this really be**

## Intensely vice-regal

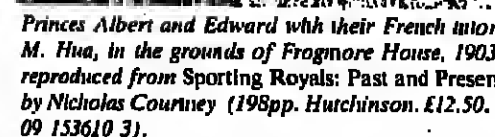
## Anne Chisholm

**RICHARD HOUGH**  
**Edwina: Countess Mountbatten of Burma**  
 239pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £9.95.  
 0297 782843

By the time she died in 1960, aged fifty-nine, Edwina, Countess Mountbatten of Burma, had spent twenty years living down the reputation she had acquired during the first forty years of her life. She was renowned for her fanatical dedication to the St John's Ambulance Brigade, the Save the Children Fund and the Red Cross, for the help she gave to wounded servicemen and refugees during the war, and for her unflinching efforts on behalf of the victims of Partition in 1947, when she and her husband, Enri Mountbatten, were the last Viceroy and Vicereine of India. But for all that, the rumours of scandal have never altogether died away.

She was the eldest daughter of Wilfred Ashley, a wealthy nephew of the Earl of Shaftesbury, and Maud Cassel, only child of the German-Jewish millionaire, Ernest Cassel, friend and adviser to Edward VII. The king, after whom she was named, became her godfather: she called him "Kinky". Even by the standards of the time, her childhood was emotionally bleak; her father was remote and her mother ailing. She was to remain over-endowed with wealth and social connections, and short of emotional stability. Her mother died when she was ten and three years later her father remarried. When she was eighteen her grandfather installed her in his Park Lane mansion as his companion and hostess. She was rich, beautiful and full of vitality; she was soon thought of as flirtatious and wild. In 1921, at a ball at Claridge's given by the Vanderbilts, she met Lord Louis Mountbatten. During their courtship, her grandfather died and left her most of his fortune; some thirty million pounds, by today's reckoning. In 1922 she married Mountbatten: the Prince of Wales, was best man. During their honeymoon in the United States they were entertained both by the President and by Charlie Chaplin: they seemed to have everything.

During the 1920s and 30s, while Mountbatten was preoccupied with his naval career, Edwina had two daughters, spent most of her time as a social butterfly and showed tendencies to independence of thought and unconventional behaviour which provoked torrents of censorious gossip. In 1932, in a murky episode



true? No doubt there is something in it, but one would back the Monarchy to survive a campaign of *false* denigration, seeing how little has to defer even to criticism that is loyal and just.

not properly explained in this book, she was brought and won an action against *The People* over an article which alleged that she had been caught "in compromising circumstances" with a coloured man and had therefore been ordered to go abroad by Buckingham Palace. Both she and Lord Mountbatten gave evidence for the defence. Although they had both, like much of high society, had black friends in the world of entertainment such as Paul Robeson and the pianist Hutch, Edwina went into the witness-box and denied having ever met the man in question.

Subsequently, she travelled a great deal; she made a series of prolonged, adventurous journeys with women companions, to Central America; the Middle East, and Thailand. In 1934 she spent four months crewing on a schooner in the Pacific; and around this time she was said to have developed socialist and republican views. She nevertheless remained on easy terms with the Royal family, and in 1939 inherited Broadlands, in Hampshire, and Glasbeawn Castle, in Ireland; on the death of her father.

"According to Richard Hough's inadequate biography, her growing sympathy with victimhood and underdogs was inherited from her reforming ancestor, the Earl of Shaftesbury, then stimulated by her feelings for black people and her consciousness of antisemitism. In the late 1930s she took to 'bringing over from Germany all her Jewish relatives and housing them in suites at the Ritz'. What is clear is that when the war took her mind off herself, she responded magnificently, and found the way to reconcile the quasi-royal obligations which she and her husband assumed with her driving need for drama, travel and emotional intensity. All of this fell into place through her close relationship, after the war, with India's first Prime Minister, Nehru was, according to this book, 'Edwina's first and only great love'."

Edwina Mountbatten was a complex, unsettling, gifted woman whose life, through the accidents of birth and marriage, involved her in great events. Her milieu, her character and her impact on the period in which she lived are all worth analysis. But Richard Hough, author of numerous books on naval history and the Mountbatten dynasty, has produced a third-rate biography, at once suggestive and unsympathetic. He has evidently been denied access to the essential source material held by the Mountbatten heirs and has pieced this book together from marginal contacts and from press cuttings.



# The promised cargo

Colin Greenland

ERICS, RABKIN (Editor). *Science Fiction: A Historical Anthology*. 539 pp. Oxford University Press. Paperback, £7.95.

MICHAEL MOORCOCK (Editor). *New Worlds: An Anthology*. 512 pp. Fontana Paperbacks, £3.50. 000 654003 1

These two thick paperbacks come independently, from opposite sides of the Atlantic, with cover paintings by Yves Tanguy and Joan Miró respectively. The message is clear. Science fiction is to be equated with surrealism: an artistic phenomenon of the modern age, developed out of scientific inquiry. The connections between psychoanalysis, surrealism and science fiction were first described by J. G. Ballard in 1966, in an article regrettably omitted from the *New Worlds* anthology. "The Coming of the Unconscious". Like surrealism, sf is an intellectual treatment of imaginary material; like surrealism, it was originally counter-culture, perceived as eccentric, even deranged, and potentially subversive. In time the bizarre has become familiar, the marginal all-pervasive. Surrealism decorates book-jackets and sf has its history documented by OUP.

Relations between science fiction and science itself have been complex and shifting. In his critical study, *Science Fiction: History - Science - Vision* (with Robert Scholes, 1977), Eric S. Rabkin made the mistake of trying to reduce them to terms of scientific subject matter. His resulting catalogue merely showed how problematic the equation really is. For *Science Fiction: A Historical Anthology* he has more wisely concentrated on the sociology of science, for sf is a function of how science is seen rather than how it's done. This story too is one of domestication. The writers of the first relevant fiction, Cervantes, Diderot, Goethe, Swift, and others, all looked at science as a threat. Whether the object of the instrument of satire, scientific practice attracted literary attention because it was felt to run counter to common sense and to generate absurdities. In the early nineteenth century, however, it became apparent that science would have serious social consequences. Here, Hoffmann, Mary Shelley and Hawthorne all automatically transcribe it in Gothic variations: nightmare, tragic melodrama, dire parable. In "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" (1845), Poe took the next step, presenting a horror story as if it were a scientific paper. The rhetoric of fiction expanded to encompass the language of science, including its implicit future tense. Pieces from Edward Bellamy and Jack London demonstrate the reinforcement of the utopian and dystopian tradition by logical extrapolation. With Wells, the possibility of science fiction was complete, and the twentieth century consolidated it.

Science, whether it was understood or not, was publicly embraced. Science was the new magic, and entered the popular soul. It emerged as a mass product, texts for an urban American cult presided over by the first pulp editor, Hugo Gernsback. Rabkin shows Abraham Merritt and John W. Campbell struggling to create the consensus of science in the wake of the First World War, blessed by Isaac Asimov, the first of the "Big Three" science fiction writers. By the 1940s, the cultural had become institutional. The first generation of writers grew up and wrote for the second, and the genre broadened. As one, and a minor, and Heinlein celebrated technological progress, while at the other, Simak and Bradbury fed the "sense of wonder", affirming the endurance of a humanizing sentiment. However displaced by science. In the middle, Arthur C. Clarke sought a point of balance with "The Star" (1935), the troubled confession of a Jesuit astrophysicist. Rabkin is unorthodox in extending this "Golden Age" of sf to 1965, after which, he says, science had become so enmeshed in the fabric of our civilization that it no longer required a separate literature to deal with it. The symbol of the cult gained wider currency in the works of pulp novelists as Pynchon and Salinger while professional sf writers - here, Roger Zelazny, Harlan Ellison, Robert Sheck-

ley and Ursula Le Guin - unlocked and expanded the generic perspective. The centrality of humanism, threatened in Clarke, is restored with its accompanying traditional literary values. Rabkin therefore announces the imminent obsolescence of sf - a bold assertion, considering that cinema today is literally remaking the naive sf of the pulp era for a far larger audience.

"Science fiction has become our reality", says Rabkin, meaning that the promised cargo has arrived, space-rockets, television, computers and all. His four examples from "The Modern Period" are all American - curiously, but conveniently, because Michael Moorcock's selection from the last ten years of his magazine *New Worlds* takes up the story, making it clear that the British attitude was subtly but significantly different. When M. John Harrison wrote in 1975, "Science fiction really has replaced science fact", he was noting that the cult had actually survived the coming of the cargo. Wilems Gernsback and Campbell had foretold a new Age of Reason, the technological escalation had in fact mystified everybody, and provoked an upsurge of anti-rationalism. Sf and fantasy became ever more elaborate (*Dune: The Lord of the Rings*), with maps and sequels and parapraxis to cater for the escapist crusade, while believers clustered around Timothy Leary and Uri Geller, scientific heretics who offered dreams and magic as "answers" to reality. People could no longer tell the difference between science and science fiction, as Erich von Däniken and Scientist L. Ron Hubbard found to their profit.



From *Miró Lithographs: 40 Works by Joan Miró* (35pp. Constable/Dover Art Library. Paperback, £2.70. 0 486 24437 7)

Hence the crisis of confidence that permeates the *New Worlds* anthology. "The future lies faintly in the arms of the present", says Brian Aldiss's pop messiah, Colin Charteris. In Michael Butterworth's "Concentrate 3", the astronauts start hallucinating: "Space became claustrophobic." Michael Moorcock, Barrington Bayley, Charles Platt and D. M. Thomas anatomize a civilization devastated by science and queasy with mystique. Science fiction was the only available source of imagery, but a polluted one. "I had little relish for most sf", Moorcock writes in his introduction. "I believed that a different kind of fiction... could come out of a marriage between existing 'experimental' forms and old-style genre sf." Amid froth and furore, the new fiction was born and at once embraced in all directions. Like all post-modernist, its writers are preoccupied with doubt, but if the future is uncertain, the fiction itself is growing out, faint, Harvey Jacobs's irrepressible, John Sladek is comically disturbing. Robert Meadly is diversely preposterous. The more studied "expeditions" of Giles Gordon and Langdon Jones are already antique, but the strength and clarity of M. John Harrison, J. G. Ballard, Pamela Zollner and Thomas M. Disch are anything more remarkable now than they seemed when they first appeared.

The anthology includes a list of the contents of every issue of *New Worlds* from 1949. Since Fontana have apparently had the manuscript for several years, it is not for their editorial credit that inconsistencies and inaccuracies remain in this list, or that it is misleadingly described as an index, while the contents page of the book itself is completely, astonishingly, wrong.

## In brief

Patricia Craig

KINGSLEY AMIS. *Collected Short Stories*. 298pp. Penguin. £1.95. 0 14 006615 2. What impresses most about Kingsley Amis is his versatility. Of the sixteen stories presented in this collection, some are science fiction pieces, some gain their effects from a charge of the supernatural, and some deal in a straightforward satirical way with contemporary social practices. One, a particularly playful story, is a Sherlock Holmes pastiche. Whether the tone is knowing, humorous or dramatic, though, its easy confidence never falters, and no extraneous emotion ever gets into it. These stories are inspiring and entertaining.

A. G. MACDONNELL. *England, Their England*. 207pp. Picador. £2.50. 0 330 38041 4. Various English institutions of the period between the wars - cricket, fox-hunting, the country house weekend, up-to-date theatre, political buffoonery, and so on - are observed through the clear eyes of an innocent Scotsman in A. G. Macdonnell's diverting novel of 1931. If the satire seems a little heavy-handed at times, and a bit too benevolent at others, the book is nevertheless perceptive and funny about the causes and effects of English dottiness and aplomb.

ANNA N. Under a Glass Bell. 107pp. Penguin. £1.95. 0 14 006172 X. These thirteen stories - mood-pieces, perhaps, would be a better description - first published in 1948, are full of inflections. The author is greatly addicted to deep feeling and, like her characters, wears her sensitivity on her sleeve. Social injustice, the allure of the lowly and the fineness of misfits are her themes. She goes in for words like "labyrinth" and "abyss". Her method is self-indulgently surrealistic when it isn't ineptly anguished. Truly, there is very little to relish or admire in this collection.

VIOLET TREBUS. *Hunt the Slipper*. 182pp. Virago. £2.95. 0 80606 378 8. Violet Trebus is a woman remembered for her affair with Vita Sackville-West; the two kept running off together between 1918 and 1921. Eight years later, her first novel was published; six others followed. In both French and English. *Hunt the Slipper*, which came out in 1937, deals with an amorous association between forty-nine-year-old Nigel Benson and the young wife of his country neighbour. If it's a little mannered and affected in tone ("Winter is so Louis-Quintine"), and not quite as smart or amusing as it must have seemed on its first appearance, it's nevertheless an engaging rediscovery.

IVY COMPTON-BURNETT. *Elders and Betters*. 304pp. 0 85031 503 4. *More Women than Men*. 231pp. 0 85031 484 4. Allison & Busby. £2.95 each. English middle-class family life is Ivy Compton-Burnett's subject, and she evolved a unique way of presenting it; her novels proceed almost entirely by means of sedate dialogue, the characters being equally articulate, and their speech completely lacking in all the normal variations in tone. The effect of this, as many critics have pointed out, is intriguing and captivating; and the quirky ruthlessness of the narrative approach makes for distinctiveness too. *Elders and Betters*, which involves some hanky-panky with a will, was first published in 1944; *More Women than Men* (1945) is set in a girls' school and now appears in paperback for the first time.

NAOMI MITCHELL. *The Corn King and the Spring Queen*. 72pp. Virago. £4.95. 0 80608 384 2. In her early historical fiction Naomi Mitchell deliberately set out to break with the convention of writing unnaturally and unrealistically about the past. *The Corn King and the Spring Queen*, a massive novel first published in 1931, shows her method at its most assured. Her narrative accommodates magic, myth, symbolism, folklore and so on, without becoming overloaded. It is set on the shores of the Black Sea, and in Sparta, between the years 288 and 187 BC, and what is most noticeable about the style is its liveliness and immediacy.

RUTH ADAM. *I'm Not Complaining*. 346pp. Virago. £3.95. 0 80608 253 2. First published in 1946, Ruth Adam's second novel presents an authoritative depiction of life on the staff of a

Nottinghamshire Elementary school in a period of social deprivation and disaffection. Crisply, candidly and ruefully narrated by a downright heroine with all her wits about her, *I'm Not Complaining* is neither a blandly documentary nor blandly moralistic. The story among women teachers to marry, and the reaction that sets in once they do - these common states of mind, along with staff-room friction, and reformist agitation of various kinds, engage the interest of Ruth Adam's diligent narrator. This is an exceptionally credible piece of fiction.

NATHANIEL WEST. *Complete Works*. 421pp. Picador. £3.50. 0 330 28153 4. Nathaniel West's four novels, now reissued in a single volume, were published between 1931 and 1939; of these, *Miss Lonelyhearts* (1933), about a male sob-sister on a New York paper, and *The Day of the Locust* (1939), set in Hollywood, are the most celebrated. "West's theme", Walter Allen wrote in *Tradition and Dream*, "is the horror and anguish of the human condition. He expresses it in comedy that is shocking and grotesque, bitter and savage." His surrealist images and extravagant satire ensured an extraordinary impact for his fiction.

BEN FORKNEA (Editor). *Modern Irish Short Stories*. Preface by Anthony Burgess. 357pp. Futura. £4.95. 0 7088 2303 3. This volume, first published in 1981, includes something by nearly every notable Irish short-story writer from George Moore (born 1852) to John McGahern (born 1934). To be sure, the work of authors such as Joyce, Sean O'Faolain, Flann O'Brien, Benedict Kelly and William Trevor can stand a lot of rereading. The fact that it caters for almost every variety of taste in Irish writing - from the delicacy of Elizabeth Bowen to the exuberance of various characters of peasant goings-on - makes this an unusually interesting collection.

JOHN MCGAHERN. *The Barracks*. 232pp. 0 571 11990 5. *The Dark*. 191pp. 0 571 11991 3. Faber. £2.95 each. No one is better than John McGahern at evoking the dangers, dullness and futility of provincial Irish life. States of misery and repression interest him, and he's adept at selecting details which reinforce the sense of hopelessness which is his starting-point. *The Barracks* (1963) and *The Dark* (1965) deal respectively with a woman dying of cancer, and an emotionally maltreated adolescent who nearly succumbs to the lure of the priesthood and the various shades of renunciation this way of life entails. McGahern brings off the difficult feat of writing about unproductive, unfulfilled lives in a far-from-unproductive way.

WILLIAM CATHER. *O Pioneers!* 318pp. Virago. £2.50. 0 80606 310 9. *O Pioneers!*, published in 1913, was Willa Cather's second novel, the first in which, as she put it, she "walked off on her own feet". Set in a Nebraska prairie, and dealing with the affairs of some Scandinavian and Bohemian settlers, it encompasses hardship, colour, robustness and vigour of the pioneering way of life.

EUDORA WELTY. *The Ponder Heart*. 133pp. Virago. £2.50. 0 80606 365 6. Eudora Welty's third novel. *The Ponder Heart* was first published in 1954. Her achievement in this book is to impose literary form on an extreme kind of Mississippi folkiness: the voice of the narrator, Edna Earle Ponder, is colloquial, colloquial and exclamatory. Edna Earle and her uncle Daniel are a striking pair: one, droll, frisky and empathic, the other amiable and feeble-minded. Eudora Welty deals in the materials of the archetypal anecdote: family disasters, absurdities and eccentricities.

EVA FIGES. *Waking*. 88pp. Hamish Hamilton. £3.50. 0 241 11131 5. Eva Figes's seventh novel (first published in 1981) has seven sections, and each section is devoted to the sensations of an unnamed woman at significant times in her life: childhood, pregnancy, and so on. The narrative moves between intense and lyrical, inevitably in conflict with Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* in particular - a comparison that calls attention to the fact that the prototype was richer and more subtly more intricate. *Waking*, however, has its own delicacy of style.

## Paperbacks

Art and Architecture

NIKOLAUS PEVSNER. *The Englishness of English Art*. 229pp. Penguin. £2.75. 0 14 055 035 6. The full scope and responsibility of the late Nikolaus Pevsner's investigation of English art and in particular building, was still unguessed when he gave the Reith Lectures, in which this book is founded, in 1955 (reviewed in the TLS of May 25, 1956). It has always been a contentious book, on a subject which Pevsner himself is ready to hedge about with qualifications and admissions of its limited practicality and usefulness. In a sense the book should be a paradigm of the particular angle of vision which Pevsner as an outsider brought to bear on English culture; but it is in fact most effective in its incidents, particularly the section on "Perpendicular England" and the discussion, extending from Celtic design to the engravings of Blake, of "The Flaming Line". The linearity and the curvilinearly which are at the heart of these chapters illustrate the potential profusion and contradiction of a perennially intriguing but largely futile line of approach.

A.J.G.H.

Biography and memoirs

DAVID CECIL. *Max: A Biography*. 507pp. Constable. £6.95. 0 09 452851 9. This biography of Max Beerbohm was first published in 1964 and reviewed in the TLS of November 26 that year. The reviewer wrote: "Lord David's own style, effortless and assured, is perfectly adapted to his theme. If Max's life was uneventful, many of his writings were directly or obliquely autobiographical, and his biographer has made a masterly synthesis of these, of letters written and received, and of other men's anecdotes. The result is a portrait of an unusual mind painted, warts and all, with an unusual sympathy."

CHRISTOPHER HIGGINS. *The Making of Charles Dickens*. 321pp. Penguin. £2.95. 0 14 006647 0. Originally published by Longmans in 1967, *The Making of Charles Dickens* was reviewed in the TLS of January 4, 1968. The reviewer wrote: "It will delight and inform the general reader, but it adds nothing substantial to the knowledge or understanding current among students of Dickens, and on the occasions when some unfamiliar fact or assertion appears, the specialist will often find insufficient documentation or argument."

DARBY O'CONNOR. *Ralph Richardson*. 336pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £2.50. 0 340 33968 3. Stephen Wall, reviewing this book in the TLS of December 24, 1982 wrote: "Richardson's response to biographical approaches is to maintain that there is 'nothing to say' about telling and 'nothing to write about' in his life as an actor... Nevertheless Ralph Richardson has considerable value as the record of the career of an actor of extraordinary resourcefulness whose littleness have profoundly influenced not only Olivier and Gielgud, the greatest of his contemporaries, but many others."

ART AND LAURA PEPER. *Straight Life: The Story of Art Pepper*. 516pp. Collier Macmillan. £15.95. 0 02 872010 5. Art Pepper, one of the most admired post-Second World War jazz saxophonists, died of a stroke last year at the age of fifty-six. His autobiography, written in collaboration with his wife Laura in 1979, has now been re-issued as a paperback in commemoration of the most "frailing" exponent of the "cool" (West Coast) jazz as well as an account of a remarkable struggle against drug addiction. Of Irish-German descent, Pepper had an uneasy childhood and adolescence in the predominantly black Los Angeles suburb of Watts, while still at high school he played regularly with Dextor Gordon, Charlie Mingus and other notable black musicians; he later worked with, among others, Shelly Manne, Shorty Rogers, Hampton Hawes and Wynton Kelly. Until he died he was never entirely free of drugs and supported his addiction with a series of "bank" recordings, some innovatively haunting, others of varying quality, often pseudonymously or under the name of the Yugoslavian pianist Milcho Kraleff. He is presented in the form of

a series of interviews and statements, is extraordinarily good on street life in US cities as well as on the travails of a jazzman junkie: it contains an updated discography and the score of Pepper's own composition, also entitled "Straight Life".

H.P.

VERNON SCANNELL. *The Tiger and the Rose*. 197pp. Robson Books. £3.95. 0 86051 227 4. If for no other reason, Vernon Scannell's brief autobiography (first published by Hamish Hamilton in 1971) and reviewed in the TLS of September 17 that year) would be memorable for its suggestion that the hanger-on is about as near as modern man is likely to come to a mystical experience. The book contains much else besides, however. Scannell's development as journalist, novelist and poet is paralleled by the account of his modest success as a boxer. His desertion from the army at the end of the war, the flight from the authorities and eventual detention, and his efforts to raise money in a variety of semi-legal ways, are all recounted in a relaxed, unpretentious prose, and the inevitable comparisons between the craft of the poet and the skill of the fighter never seem forced.

J.C.

Chess

RAYMOND SMULLYAN. *The Chess Mysteries of the Arabian Knights*. 170pp. Hutchinson. £5.95. 0 09 146561 3. To standard chess puzzles you are given a position and asked to achieve a mate from it in a given number of moves. Professor Smullyan's latest book (first published in the US in 1981) includes some of these, but the fifty main puzzles in it are of a different sort. Smullyan calls them problems in retrograde analysis; a position is given (maybe with extra information) and the task is to deduce something about the history or content of the set-up. For example, you might have to determine which of two white king's bishops was the original one, or whether a certain missing pawn was captured or promoted. The problems, most of which are for fun, are presented in whimsical and witty stories with Arabian characters. Smullyan provides solutions, making one marvel at the power of deduction and his ingenuity. The book will appeal to (and probably only to) puzzle-lovers who are also chess players, but they will enjoy it hugely.

P.F.S.

Music

*The Edwardian Song Book: Drawing Room Ballads, 1900-1914*. Selected and introduced by Michael R. Turner and Antony Miall. 232pp. Methuen. £5.95. 0 413 53800 1. This book (first published in 1982) has one serious fault. It omits Oley Spaulk's setting of Kipling's "The Road to Mandalay". But everything else about it is commendable: the editors' introduction and commentary; the photographs, above all that of the captivating "Lawrence Hope", or Adele Nicholson, who wrote the words for two of the *Four Indian Love Lyrics*. Included here, "Kashmiri Song" and "Till I Wake" (and who in 1890 followed her dashing husband on the Zhoob Valley expedition, through the Afghan passes, disguised as a Pathan boy); and the songs which, when not by Elgar or Vaughan Williams, seem to be by Cole Porter out of Debussy. Songs of Empire, of Countryside, of Passion and Sentiment - "England, My England", "Land of Hope and Glory", "Drake's Drum", "Nirvana", "Mazurka", "Linden Lea", "Palmouth Town" and "Mother o' Mine", among many others.

G.S.

Philosophy

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE. *Between Existentialism and Marxism*. 301pp. New Left Books. £5.95. 0 86091 782 7. This collection of essays and interviews, now published in paperback by the Verso imprint of New Left Books, was first published in English in 1974. The essays and interviews are all taken from *Situations XIII* and *Situations IX* published by Gallimard in 1972 and reviewed in the TLS of March 24 of that year. Among the contents are Sartre's

essays on Vietnam, Czechoslovakia and France; Kierkegaard, Mallarmé and Tintoretto; the interview, "The literary of a Thought" in which Sartre explains his views about Freud and the unconscious, and a tape-recorded "Dialogue" between a psychiatrist and his patient of three years, in which the patient violently demands that the psychiatrist justify himself, and elicits a terrified and equally violent response. The TLS reviewer, W. D. Redfern, wrote: "While he [Sartre] is as conscious as any of his critics that his work suffers from 'hernias of the pen', he is surely right to claim that the best of it, and several texts here are in that number, needs no truss."

M.F.

Poetry

OMAR KHAYYAM. *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. 128pp. Penguin. £4.95. 0 14 00 59547 0. "How long boy will you chatter about the five senses and the four elements? What matter if the puzzles be one or a hundred thousand? We are dust, strum the harp boy. We are air, boy, bring out the wine." First published in 1979, this beautiful book collects 235 of the *rubaiyat* or quatrains, attributed to Omar Khayyam the Persian astronomer, philosopher and mathematician, who lived from 1048-1131. Newly translated by Peter Avery and John Heath-Stubbs, the *rubaiyat* are accompanied by a magnificent series of (sixteenth and seventeenth-century) Persian miniatures. Peter Avery also contributes an excellent introduction.

G.S.

Travel and topography

PATRICK LEIGH FERMOA. *Route 1. Travels in Northern Greece*. 248pp. Penguin. £2.95. 0 14 009504 7. The name *Route 1* (a vague and obsolete colloquial term designating the whole of Northern Greece) is the peg on which Patrick Leigh Fermor hangs a disparate set of recollections of travels in that area; there is the quasi-anthropological study of the "Saraktas", a primitive and moribund nomadic community whose origins he somewhat whimsically traces back to Geometric Greece; there are the mid-air monasteries of the Meteora, targets which invite an awesome barrage of arcane terminology from Leigh Fermor's histories of Byzantine lore, historical, ecclesiastical and iconographic. More idiosyncratic still, there is his defence of Romiosyne (demotic, Byzantine, Klephtic Greece) against the jejune Hellenism of school-masters and politicians. *Route 1* also includes memories of the resistance in Crete, a pilgrimage in search of Byron's "boots", and a study of the cant ("Bollarie") vocabulary of the beggars of the "Kravara". These are the elements which, distilled, are the essence of Patrick Leigh Fermor.

K.A.McC.

MUNGO PARK. *Travels into the Interior of Africa*. 388pp. Elbad Books. £4.95. 0 907871 55 0. This paperback edition of *Travels into the Interior of Africa*, originally published by J. M. Dent in 1954, has a new preface by Jeremy Swift. Mungo Park undertook his search for the course and the source of the river Niger in two journeys: the first from 1795 to 1797, and the second in 1805. This Scottish country doctor's epic journey, still exerts a strong fascination, nearly 200 years after he achieved the intellectual objective of his mission and established that "the long sought for majestic Niger glittering in the morning sun, as broad as the Thames at Westminster", flowed eastwards, and he continues to inspire followers in his footsteps. The travel-writer Richard Owen wrote *Sage of the Niger* after following Park's route 4,000 miles from modern Dakar to Burutu in the Niger Delta. This summer Oxford University mounted its undergraduate Mungo Park Expedition to retrace his second journey, from Sansanding to Bussa. Unlike Mungo Park, mercifully, none of these followers needed to echo his valediction of November 1805: "All ready and we sail tomorrow morning... to the east with the fixed resolution to discover the termination of the Niger or perish in the attempt."

A.H.M.K.G.

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